DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 054 840	LI 003 117
AUTHOR	Penland, Patrick R.
TITLE	Leadership Development for Librarians.
INSTITUTION	Pittsburgh Univ., Pa. Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences.
PUB DATE	71
NOTE	112p.;(6 References)
AVAILABLE FROM	Bookstore, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15213 (2.00)
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$6.58
DESCRIPTORS	*Career Planning; Communication (Thought Transfer); Community Relations; *Community Services; Discussion Groups; *Human Resources; *Leadership Training; *Librarians; Public Libraries
IDENTIFIERS	*Library Administration

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this manual is to provide a guide to the inservice training of librarians for community liaison through the group work process. The manual was developed for the supervisor participants in the Institute on Discovery Management for Supervisors of Library Branches Serving the Underprivileged and Emerging Communities and is a companion volume to the institute papers, "Communications Management of Human Resources" (Bookstore, University of Pittsburgh, 1971). The aim is to provide a training manual which will lead to competence in group discussion methods and to an understanding of the major problems associated with group activity and community development work. The sessions have been designed to help a group acquire: increased sensitivity to the major factors involved in the discussion process; understand the importance and value of group discussion methods; develop skill in diagnosing the problems which a group leader may handle; acquire experience in leading discussion, in order to build leadership skills; and understand the role of skillful interpersonal relations as a technique for bridging the gap between the "passivity" of discussion and the activism of community involvement. This manual includes a number of separate topics which could be covered in a short training program. (Author)

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LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
FOR LIBRARIANS

Patrick R. Penland

Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences

1971
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

LI 003 117

CREDIT

This manual on interpersonal communication is based upon the innovative and experimental study discussion and training programs of the Fund for Adult Education.

("Discourse Units in Human Communication for Librarians")

This manual is a companion volume to Communications Management of Human Resources and is designed to serve as a guide to inservice training in interpersonal communication.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this manual is to provide a guide to the inservice training of librarians for community liaison through the group work process. The manual was developed for the supervisor participants in the Institute on Discovery Management for Supervisors of Library Branches Serving the Underprivileged and Emerging Communities. This manual is a companion volume to the institute papers, Communications Management of Human Resources (Bookstore, University of Pittsburgh, 1971).

The Institute on Discovery Management, held July 26 - August 13, 1971 at the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh, was funded under a grant from the U.S. Office of Education, Title II-B, Higher Education Act of 1965, P.L. 89-329 as amended. A unique feature of the Institute was the requirement that each participating branch library supervisor hold a mini-institute for leadership teams composed of branch librarians and neighborhood citizen liaison leaders. It was for this purpose that the present manual was developed.

This manual does not exist in conceptual isolation as do so many of the texts in librarianship. While a practical guide to group activity, it has been developed within the framework of a situation-producing theory of communication for librarians (Communications for Librarians. Bookstore, University of Pittsburgh, 1971). The manual is a practical application of the conceptually interlocking system of communications theory and communicative services which has been developed at the Graduate School of Library and Information Sciences, University of Pittsburgh.

Indeed without a systems approach to communicative activity, it is unlikely that the librarian's role as a change agent in the community will ever be developed to provide informational and program support as well as for the recruitment and training of minority group lay leaders for the role of liaison between community and library. The purpose is to enable citizens, especially from minority and underprivileged groups to realize their full potential for changed behaviors, as well as their involvement in determining library policy.

Although this manual is within the traditions and principles of library service, it asserts the importance of, and provides the basis for demonstrating that a bold new approach is needed in library administration. It is imperative that the library administrator be adept at group dynamics and skills, if he is ever to exert leadership in solving the problems facing librarians today. Group work is not new in the library profession but since no theory of communication has been available to librarians, group work has remained largely a polite assemblage of individuals playing the parliamentary procedure game within the rather rigid communications infrastructure known as library and information science.

It is not the purpose of this approach to communication to deny the value of and necessity for an expanded communications infrastructure as represented by the systems and network approach to libraries and information centers. Organized documents and indexed resources delimit the environment or information space within which retrieval searches can be made. However complex and extensive the infrastructure, the information potential remains latent until a communications profession emerges which can create the conditions within which meaning can be engendered within individuals, groups and communities.

As a result of the 1926 report to the American Library Association, Libraries and Adult Education, and the training help provided by the American Heritage Project, the library profession has had some experience with the discussion group process. But the discussion method can scarcely be considered to have caught the imagination of librarians as a major communicative device. The basic reason appears to be a lack of understanding and fear of group dynamics. The aim of this manual is not to develop group dynamics trainers. The objective is to realize the potential, however latent, in every professional librarian to develop innovative and experimental programs of interpersonal communication.

While the book discussion methods developed in the American Heritage Project are valuable skills to have, they are insufficient when it comes to the rough-and-tumble dynamics of encounter and confrontation happenings. In extreme cases, any continuing and skillful followup to an encounter interface resembles more the therapeutic group dynamics than it does the lively exchange of ideas in a library book discussion designed to promote a liberal education. People should be accepted where they are, not where the librarian thinks they ought to be. Traditional training in the infrastructure of communication has not made librarians particularly perceptive of this problem.

The aim of this guide is to provide a training manual which will lead to competence in group discussion methods and to an understanding of the major problems associated with group activity and community development work. More specifically, the sessions have been designed to help a group acquire:

> Increased sensitivity to the major factors involved in the discussion process.

Understand the importance and value of group discussion methods.

Develop skill in diagnosing the problems which a group leader may handle.

Acquire experience in leading discussion, in order to build leadership skills.

Understand the role of skillful interpersonal relations as a technique for bridging the gap between the "passivity" of discussion and the activism of community involvement.

This manual includes a number of separate topics which could be covered in a short training program. The topics have been divided in such a way as to permit the training group to concentrate attention on the importance aspects of group activity. All of these topics are related one to another as the group progresses in a developmental manner. When this manual is used as a guide to a shorter mini-institute, the group leader may wish to combine some of the topics. The topics in the manual may be divided into two major parts: the how and what of group activity.

HOW includes those topics which deal with the processes of group work, the problems of participation and how it is affected by leadership and by individual needs as well as by content, i.e. section one.

WHAT includes those topics which deal with the problems involved in communicating ideas, acquiring concepts and information as well as thinking, i.e. section two.

Libraries were found on the faith that their presence makes the community better. Librarians accomplish this objective through the medium of books and other materials for learning. By adding a group and community dimension to its program, the library can move from being a passive community resource to an active communications agent. Librarians, with their traditions, resources, and educated personnel are the appropriate and logical agency to sponsor group study. More particularly, the group study program can deepen and enrich the group effectiveness of the library staff.

In order to increase knowledge and understanding of the group process, it is necessary to change attitudes and increase appreciation. Communication must be understood as well as the three major components of group activity, i.e. group, leadership, content. The how and what of the group process can be understood if the three major components are examined in a number of different ways. Among the elements of a communication strategy to be developed, the following are significant:

> Describe the basic concepts essential for effective leadership in a group discussion program.
>
> Illustrate as many concepts as possible in actual group situations led by the branch librarian and community liaison leader.
>
> Provide an opportunity for members of the group (the librarian-leader team who are being trained) to apply some of these concepts in actual inservice training situations.
>
> Provide evaluative experiences in order to test the extent to which these concepts have been understood and applied by the members of the group.

Group activity is a process which is used in many different ways: to reach decisions around a conference table; to come to agreement on a group action; or to provide an opportunity for individual members of the group to learn. Although the group is not the only situation in which learning can and does occur, it is unique in one important respect. In formal classroom situations, the individual and the material from which he learns are the only components required. The learning consists of direct transfers between the two whether or not communication does occur.

In the group situation, on the other hand, many people are involved. Not only are there other members present but leadership of some kind is also essential. While the person reading a book, seeing a film, or listening to a lecture is interacting only with the ideas presented, the member of a discussion group is also interacting with others and with the leader. Communication through discussion is a far more complicated process involving cooperative effort as well as considerable selfdiscipline.

Because of the complex nature of the group situation, it may be helpful to look briefly at the total situation in terms of three of its basic components: Group; Leadership; and Content or Subject Matter. Taken together, these may be represented as the communicative matrix of the group encounter.

The group, leader and content are not the only influences on the group situation. There are other elements outside the group which affect the learning of the participants, such as the climate of thinking in the community, as well as local and national attitudes toward freedom and inquiry. The group is made up of a number of individuals, each of whom brings to the encounter situation different personalities. These aspects of the individuals that make up the group set them apart from each other.

At the same time that each of these individuals differs from the others, all of them have something in common. There is a common desire to learn, an interest in the same subject, a preference for learning with others rather than by themselves as is evident when a group of branch librarians and neighborhood leaders come together to discuss the role of the library in community affairs.

In any discussion group one or several individuals must be responsible for seeing that the leadership functions are performed. In some programs there is one leader who performs this function for the duration of the program. In other programs, two coleaders share major responsibility. In still others there is one leader who has major responsibility for the duration of the program. However, he tries to involve as many different members in the group as possible as coleaders during the course of the program. No matter what the particular leadership pattern may be in the program, the formal or designated leader cannot perform all of the leadership roles and functions which are required for an effective group learning situation.

As a program progresses or a session develops, it is important that the leader must create situations in which major differences between him and the group members are decreased. In such instances different members of the group may assume some of those leadership roles which come naturally to them. Just as different individuals bring different resources and personalities to the group expereince, so do leaders. Leadership style depends largely upon the attitudes and personality of an individual, but it is also determined to some extent by the demands of the program itself, since different content and goals may require different styles of leadership.

Every group is organized around some specific content. The group also has a learning and communications goal which involves that content. If the group is really working toward its accepted goal, then everything it does has some relevance to the content. One way of seeking this is to think about the group as within a particular field of content which provides a focus for its effort. To the extent that subject matter makes different demands on both the leader and the group, it is an important determinant of the effectiveness of the group effort.

Taken together, these three components of group, leader and content make up the major aspects of the group encounter situation, and will serve as a convenient device for describing the way in which library group activities develop and are maintained for communicative purposes. It is of fundamental importance that a climate be created within which communication can occur, such as the common study and analysis of library-community concerns and interests.

Group work is a communicative process employed for such purposes as to reach decisions, to come to agreement or group action, and to provide a learning opportunity for individual participants. The group process is such a unique learning experience because all participants are involved in both the teaching and learning enterprise.

Librarians may be adept at readers advisory and reference work where the individual reads a book, sees a film or listens to a lecture and where the quality of communication is determined by the intrapersonal learning skills of the reader.

In group work, the quality of the communicative process is primarily determined by the leadership, the group and the content. There are of course other elements outside the group and over which it has no immediate control which also affect communication such as the climate of thinking in the community as well as local and national attitudes towards freedom and inquiry. In any event, each of the major components functions not in isolation but in a dynamic interrelationship with one another.

Group activity is a process which is used in many different ways: to reach decisions, to agree on an action program or to provide an opportunity to communicate and learn. Librarians sponsor group activity for all of these reasons. But since they also operate on the principle of taking people where they are at any educational or interest level, the librarian's organized group activity may grow out of "bull sessions" or the enjoyment of conversation or discussion for its own sake.

Although the group is not the only situation in which learning can and does occur, it is unique in one important respect. In formal learning situations, the individual and the material from which he learns are the only components required, and the learning consists of direct communication between the two. In the group, on the other hand, other people are involved. Not only are there other members present but leadership of some kind is also essential. The person reading a book, seeing a film or listening to a lecture, is interacting with others and with the leader. Communication through discussion is a far more complicated situation, involving cooperative effort as well as self-discipline.

SECTION ONE

The HOW of group activity includes those topics which deal with the process of discussion, the problems of participation and of how it is affected by leadership, by individual needs as well as content.

Climate

Leadership

Participation

Content and Materials

CLIMATE

HOW do INDIVIDUALS and Individual DIFFERENCES Affect Behavior within a Group?

Practically nothing in terms of content consequence is achieved during the first session of a group activity. Participants are much too busy studying the people around them, measuring themselves against those others, deciding how they like the leader, and trying in general to become comfortable in the new surroundings.

The leader must, from outset, help to create a people's climate which will permit individual members of group to assert their individuality and to realize that they are expected to participate as individuals. Members of the group must receive assurance and security (as well as common understandings and purposes) through sharing in and understanding of the goals and limits of the program. The procedure to be used in achieving these goals must also be given sufficient consideration.

To create the necessary climate and to provide for the fullest participation, the leader should understand the extent of individual differences within the group both with respect to motivations for joining, as well as their interests and needs. The leader must realize the importance of some flexibility in approach so as to permit an outlet for these individual differences.

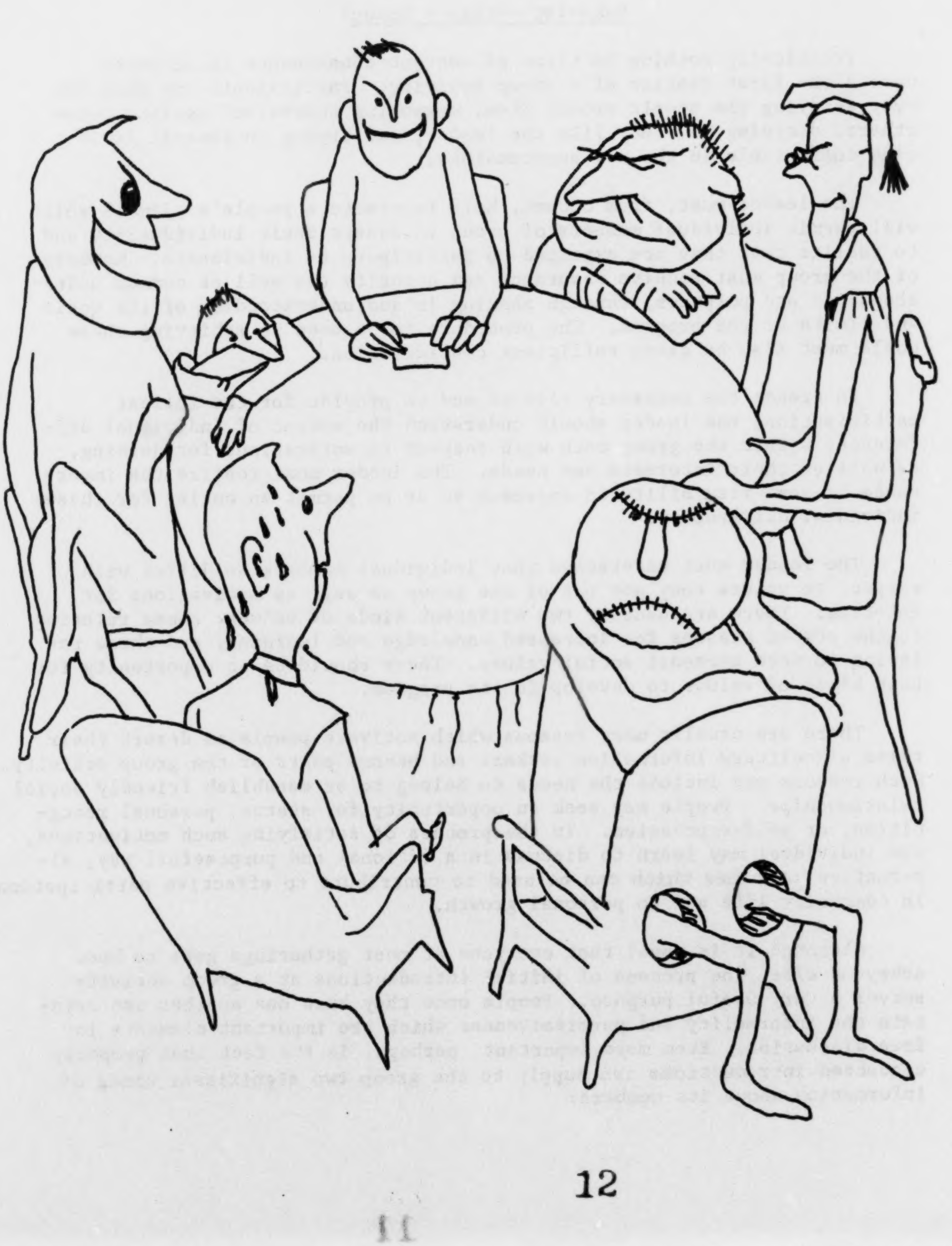
The leader must understand that individual members do differ with respect to values they get out of the group as well as motivations for entering. There are usually two different kinds of values: those relating to the stated reasons for increased knowledge and learning, and those relating to more personal social values. There should be an opportunity for both kinds of values to develop in the program.

There are usually many reasons which motivate people to desert their roles as solitary information seekers and become parts of the group activity. Such reasons may include the needs to belong to or establish friendly social relationships. People may seek an opportunity for status, personal recognition, or self-expression. In the process of satisfying such motivations, the individual may learn to discuss in a rational and purposefull way, alternative outcomes which can be used to contribute to effective participation in community life and to personal growth.

Although it is usual that everyone at most gatherings gets to know everyone else, the process of initial introductions at a group activity serves a very useful purpose. People once they know one another can maintain the informality and permissiveness which are important elements in free discussion. Even more important, perhaps, is the fact that properly conducted introductions can supply to the group two significant kinds of information about its members:

9

"Meet the Folks"



Reasons people have for joining the group and therefore some clues for what the discussions might focus on.

Experiences which people have had with the general subject to be discussed provide an indication of resources which the group can later draw on.

Difficulties may arise in group activity because either the leader or participants do not understand each other's roles. Members of the group need to widen their experiences because roles are seldom fixed. Each of the following activities will help participants appreciate the range of factors which occur. Each participant should at some time perform the following roles:

As participant he will be taking an active part in one kind of discussion or another, demonstation or practice.

As observer he may be an observer, record what is going on, but not participate.

As discussion leader be will have an opportunity to lead a practice discussion, followed by an evaluation by the group and himself.

As a result of participation in each of these roles, the librarian should obtain a better rounded view of group activity both for the cognitive, rational or task processes as well as for emotional or group maintainence processes. The group will begin to think analytically about the group process and may develop standards for judging the effectiveness of the discussion.

Leadership patterns vary by group from the "leaderless" one to the highly structured formal program type that is common in program planning. Regardless of leadership pattern, any designated leader when "meeting the folks" cannot perform all of the leadership roles and functions which are required for an effective communication situation. However, initially the leader must create a situation in which major differences between him and the participants are decreased and whereby different members of the group may assume some of the leadership roles which come naturally to them.

In some respects assigned leadership may be considered a temporary hosting function, as it sets the climate for convivality of conversation. Once the conversation is lively and exhibits patterns of discussion techniques, then assigned leadership slips into the background and begins to participate as an equal in the exciting process it has helped to initiate. In this function of catalytic agent, attentive listening is essential. The following points may serve as guides to the newly assigned leader:

Respect the opinions of all participants. Do not evaluate or criticize any comments. Listen attentively to everything said.

Ask questions. Do not answer questions. Redirect them to the group.

Allow people time to think. Ask a question and wait. Do not rephrase, or add to the question. Look interested and someone will answer when he has had time to frame an answer.

Allow the group time to answer one another. Do not make a comment or ask another question every time someone speakes.

Keep the group on the subject. If the discussion wanders, remind the group of the question or topic. If you are working with an on-the-spot reading, refer to this material frequently.

Watch the group closely and constantly to see who is ready to comment.

Help people to say what they mean. Restate a comment if necessary and ask, "Have I understood you correctly?", or ask a question for clarification.

Nail down what has been said. Summarize before going on to another phase of the topic.

Probably every participant, but certainly every leader experiences an initial dread or stage fright in "meeting the folks" in the group. Depending upon experience, this reaction may be vague or fairly well understood as the obvious reaction of inexperienced individuals in a group. The following roles are what "come naturally" to people who need help in recognizing and in overcoming such non-functional roles. From time to time, more often perhaps than anyone like to admit, people behave in nonfunctional ways that do not help and sometimes actually harm the group and the work it is trying to do:

BEING AGGRESSIVE: working for status by criticizing or blaming others, showing hostility against the group or some individual, deflating the ego or status of others.

BLOCKING: interfering with the progress of the group by going off on a tangent, citing personal experiences unrelated to the problem, arguing too much on a point, rejecting ideas without consideration.

SELF-CONFESSION: using a group as a sounding board, expressing personal, nongroup-oriented feelings or points of view.

COMPETING: vying with others to produce the best idea, talk the most, play the most roles, gain favor with the leader.

SEEKING SYMPATHY: trying to induce other group members to be sympathetic to one's own problems or misfortunes, deploring one's situation, or disparaging one's ideas to gain support.

SPECIAL PLEADING: introducing or supporting suggestions related to one's own pet concerns or philosophics, lobbying.

HORSING AROUND: clowning, joking, mimicking, disrupting the work of the group.

SEEKING RECOGNITION: attempting to call attention to one's self by loud or excessive talking, extreme ideas, unusual behavior.

WITHDRAWAL: acting indifferent or passive, resorting to excessive formality, daydreaming, doodling, whispering to others, wandering from the subject.

These nonfunctional roles are expressions of emotional needs which people try out in an effort to achieve satisfaction. The desire for satisfaction (homeostasis) includes at least four wishes or needs: security, new experiences, status (recognition) and emotional response. Needs such as these are expressed variously by different individuals. Some people only feel secure in dominating others. Others find security in being dependent. Some individuals express their need for recognition by talking constantly about themselves; others have strong drives for achieving titles or position.

People tend to develop behaviors which meet their needs and cling to them regardless of whether they make other people uncomfortable or not. Of course the initial group leader cannot directly help people out of their emotional difficulties. He remembers however that the individual by becoming a group participant has implicity declared another purpose: the avoved aim of learning more about the subject content, increasing his ability to think, or improving himself in some other way.

These two purposes may complement one another, but they may also come into conflict. Since the individual shares his communicative aims with other participants, each member of the group needs to understand what others are saying. All participants want to have an opportunity to develop or challenge an idea and expect that persons who continuously impede effective thinking will be dealt with. Consequently the initial leader has considerable support in helping to create the climate for maximum participation.

The function of the initial leader is to transfer as rapidly as possible leadership to various participants. In the very beginning with a new group, the leader will probably place major emphasis on creating a climate which will stimulate participation and bring out as many members as possible. The following methods include the kinds of questions and the manner of statement which are designed to aid the most reluctant member in making a contribution:

> Ask questions which do not tend to put people on the spot by checking the amount or type of information that they have on a particular point. (Questions which put people on the spot will draw out only the members of the group who have a store of facts and information and will inhibit the others).
>
> Use questions which do not merely call for a "yes or no" or "agree or disagree" answer. "Yes or no" questions do not stimulate discussion and merely set a pattern whereby members of the group feel that their role is one of being led, or misled, by the leader.
>
> Ask questions which are simple, clear and concise rather than wide-open so that members of the group know what you want them to discuss. This will avoid confusion and will stimulate general participation.

In the beginning of the program select questions which deal with experiences which any member of the group might discuss or with opinions about some subject emphasizing that everyone's opinion is of interest or importance. At the very outset of a program it may be well to go entirely around the table in soliciting opinions or experiences of group members. In this way everyone in the group will make some contribution (no matter how small) and will have the experience of participating. Since the first attempt to say something is frequently the most difficult, this procedure provides a built-in method which permits everyone to take part.

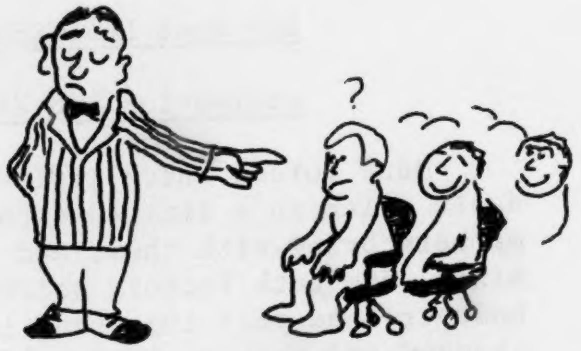
In stimulating participation it is especially important that the leader accept the contributions made by all of the members. He should try to tie them into the general trend of the discussion. He should also give each member the fooling that he really has contributed something to the thinking of the group. This will be effective not only in letting all of the members feel that they have made a worthwhile contribution but also it will help to set a climate of acceptance which will stimulate further participation, and the development of logical reasoning and effective learning.

HOW DO YOU QUESTION ?

First call participant by name, and then state the question...

OR

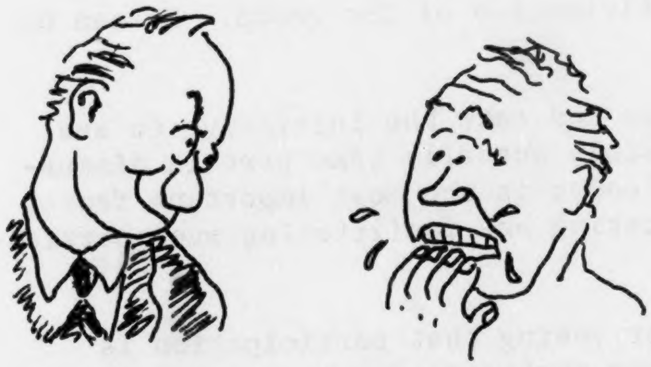
State the question first - pause - and then call name of participant.

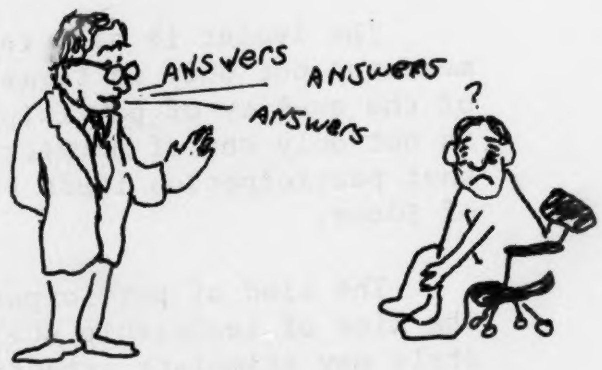


Look at participant you expect to answer the question...

OR

Look at any or all group members when stating a question.

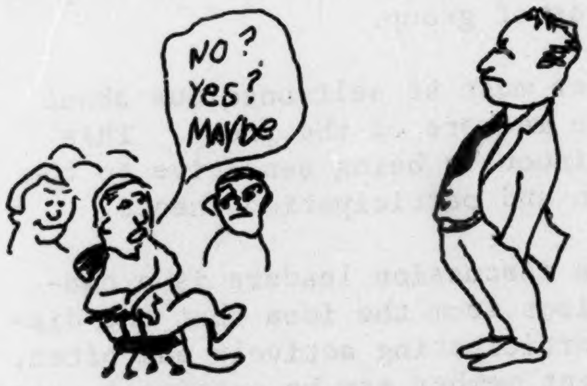




Do you accept the first correct answer, and reply that it was correct...

OR

Do you "throw" back correct answers as well as wrong answers to other participants to comment on.



Do you use "yes" or "no" questions. He has a 50-50 chance of being correct...

"Is this a mill file?"
"Is a mill file used for smooth surfaces?"

OR

Do you use the "thought" question? This answer requires thinking.

"What kind of file is this?"
"If it is a mill file, what's its use?"

****

We learn in proportion as we are able to think.

LEADERSHIP

How does LEADERSHIP and Leadership STYLES Affect Participation and Effectiveness in a Discussion Program?

Many forces which influence participation can only be recognized and dealt with to a limited extent. The individual needs which group members bring with them, and the content of the discussion, once determined, are both factors which one can do little to change. There is, however, one very important influence on group participation which can be changed and that is leadership. The leader does have control over his own behavior which determines the participation of the group. He can do something about it.

The leader must create the climate and take the initiative to see that, as many members of group as possible actually take part in discussion. The attitude and style of the leader is the most important factor in the beginning of a program in permitting and facilitating such participation.

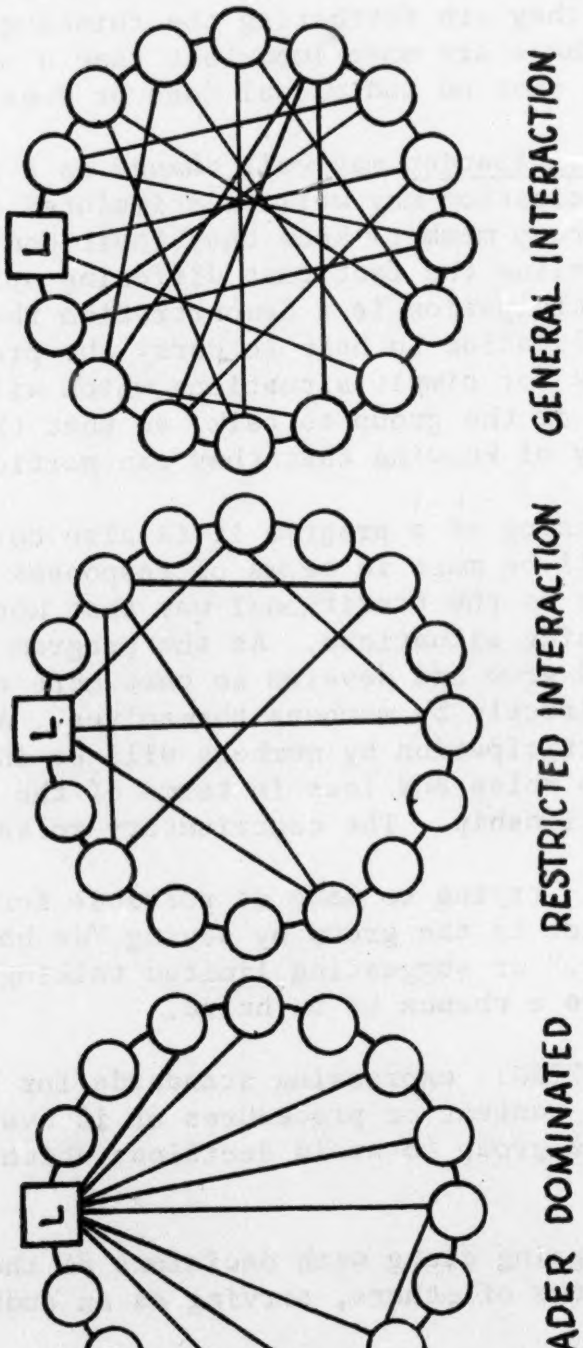
The leader is also responsible for seeing that participation is measured not only in terms of the number participating but also in terms of the quality of participation. The leader's responsibility therefore is not only one of permitting members to participate but also of ensuring that participation leads to thinking, learning and the sound development of ideas.

The kind of participation and its quality are directly affected by the kind of leadership style adopted by the leader. A highly demanding style may stimulate attention but it also develops tensions and arguments. A highly permissive style may stimulate wide participation and a feeling of ease but it also results in more relaxed and less intense participation. The leader must, therefore, fit his style into the demands of the subject-matter and to the changing status and needs of group.

To be completely effective, the leader must be selfconscious about his leadership and the impact of it on the members of the group. This selfconsciousness can be achieved by continuously being sensitive to the group as well as by the use of observation and participation sheets.

Often the major anxiety which plagues discussion leaders is a concern for getting everyone to talk. It arises from the idea that the discussion is a failure if everyone is not participating actively and often. But participation can be silent. The silent member may be getting a great deal out of the discussion. The leader, then, can best encourage maximum participation not by making sure that everyone is talking, whether he wants to or not, but by doing everything possible to create the conditions which make people feel free to come in when they want to. In attempting to develop effective participation there are several considerations:

INTERACTION PATTERNS


L
L
L
LEADER DOMINATED
RESTRICTED INTERACTION
GENERAL INTERACTION

Quality of participation is more important than quantity of participation. Participation can probably best be measured in terms of the kinds of contributions made by members of the group: the extent to which there is a flow of one idea to another; the degree to which members of the group are applying the content to their own interests and concerns; and the extent to which they are furthering the thinking and understanding of the group. All of these are more important then a mere check on the number of contributions that an individual does or does not make.

Kind of participation may well change as a program develops. In the beginning, participation may well be stimulated by the leader, primarily to ensure that group members know that their contributions will be welcome and to underline the fact that differing opinions will be accepted. This kind of participation is a demonstration that the members of the group have an obligation to help to carry the program. Also, it may be important to look for simple situations which will permit the more shy and retiring members of the group to talk, so that they may have the satisfaction and security of knowing that they can participate.

In the beginning of a program it is also to be expected that member participation will be more in terms of responses to, and ideas aimed at, the leader. This is the traditional way that most people have acted in the past in learning situations. As the program develops, however, participation should grow and develop so that more and more of the contributions are made directly by members themselves. As the program develops, more and more participation by members will be in terms of assuming some of the leadership roles and less in terms of the old school-room "student-to-teacher" relationship. The contributory roles include:

GATEKEEPING: trying to make it possible for another member to make a contribution to the group by saying "We haven't heard anything from Jim yet," or suggesting limited talking time for everyone so that all will have a chance to be heard.

STANDARD SETTING: expressing standards for the group to use in choosing its content or procedures or in evaluating its decisions; reminding the group to avoid decisions which conflict with group standards.

FOLLOWING: going along with decisions of the group, thoughtfully accepting ideas of others, serving as an audience during group discussion.

EXPRESSING GROUP FEELING: summarizing what group feeling is sensed to be, describing resections of the group to ideas.

Effective and intelligent listening as a means of participation cannot be over-emphasized. To participate verbally it is first necessary to participate by listening to what is going on and to understand what is being discussed. Only by intelligent listening will a contribution further the discussion and work towards the goals of the group.

Different people contribute in different ways. Participation by all members cannot be uniform or standard. Some members of the group participate most helpfully when the group is bogged down, others when things are going smoothly. Some can act best as authorities and resource people, others as persons who raise doubts and questions. The same person may not even participate in the same way on two different days. Effective participation is engendered in a variety of ways:

No one is permitted to monopolize discussion.

Discussion is for the most part carried on among members of the group rather than just between members and the leader.

The group does not break down into cliques or sub-groups which tend to impede or complicate general discussion.

High level of participation is evident rather than an emphasis on participation merely for its own sake.

An air of objectivity is maintained--that is, discussion is focused on ideas, not on personalities.

Members are attentive and respectful of contributions of all members (including direct member to member discussion rather than relying solely on the leader to maintain order and attention.

Members understand the importance of listening to others and understanding what they say as a prerequisite for active participation themselves.

Contributions and suggestions by group members are accepted and utilized in an adult and friendly manner both by the leader and other members of the group.

Differing opinions, points of view, experiences, and backgrounds are accepted and valued, rather than frowned upon or rejected.

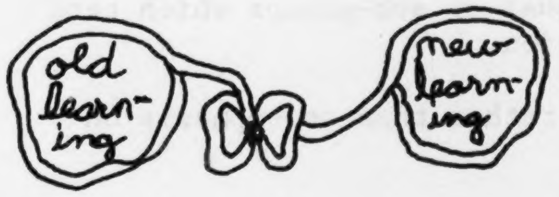
Contributions of all members are accepted on the basis of their value or pertinency rather than on the basis of the social status of the person making the contribution.

Pointers for the Group Leader

There are no iron-clad rules, no pet formulas, no easy slogans that will insure you of success in a discussion group.

The following suggestions, however, will assist you at the beginning:

1. Be your natural self - it is said that even a child can sense an artificial pretense - then surely your adult participants can.
2. Enthusiasm is contagious - show enthusiam in your leadership, and a genuine interest in every participant.
3. Use the language your participants can understand - don't use technical, occupational, or professional expressions until they are explained.



4. Tie in the new with the old - only when we can understand a relationship between the new experience and an old experience - do we learn.
5. Are you getting your point across? Group participation (including the timid souls) is one of the easiest ways to find out if your point has been made.

6. Use the three F's - always be fair, congruent and friendly in your relationship with group members.
7. Be informal but business like - adults can learn and will learn when at ease in the group.

****

Critism is like advice - easy to give and hard to take!

Accounts of personal experiences are encouraged and permitted only insofar as they are relevant to the discussion.

Members assume or share various leadership functions with the leader: helping the leader and each other by clarifying various points made; pushing for facts and data underlying expressed opinions; carrying discussion forward toward agreed-upon goals; dealing with troublesome members.

Measuring the quantity and direction of participation of a group will give you only limited data concerning many of the points just listed. It is, however, useful to keep a sharp eye on the participation level. While it may have little significance taken by itself, it can ring a warning bell on some major difficulties. For this reason it is sometimes a good idea to have one member chart the number of people participating, the amount of talking done by individuals, and the extent to which attention is general rather than directed to the leader.

Demonstration Discussion:

A demonstration should consist of a discussion, led by the leader, which will give the group an opportunity to focus on differences in leadership styles and their effect on participation. The evaluation session following the discussion should consider:

Good and bad features of the discussion.

Analysis of the leadership styles demonstrated.

Analysis of participation, relating observed differences to leadership style.

One way of evaluating a discussion is to diagram it as it goes on, noting how many people talk, how often they talk, and who talks to whom. If leader behavior does have a significant effect on participation, such a diagram should reflect differences between one leader and another, or between one kind of leadership style and another.

A member of the group should be requested to act as an observer during the demonstration. He will not participate in the discussion but will assume responsibility for charting the flow of communication on a chart.

He should be instructed to draw a diagram of the seating arrangements, identifying each member by a number; note each statement made by members and leaders; and record: who said it, and to whom it was directed.

This kind of diagram reveals only one aspect of a discussion process. It tells how people participated. But it says nothing about the quality or the content of the discussion. One could conceivably have a spirited and well-conducted discussion in which only inanities were spoken. There are a number of differences in leadership style:

Flexibility in adapting to expressed interests of the group.

Degree to which the members feelings are accepted.

Degree to which the free expression of ideas and feelings are encountered.

Extent and manner of participation in the discussion (guide, arbiter, authority).

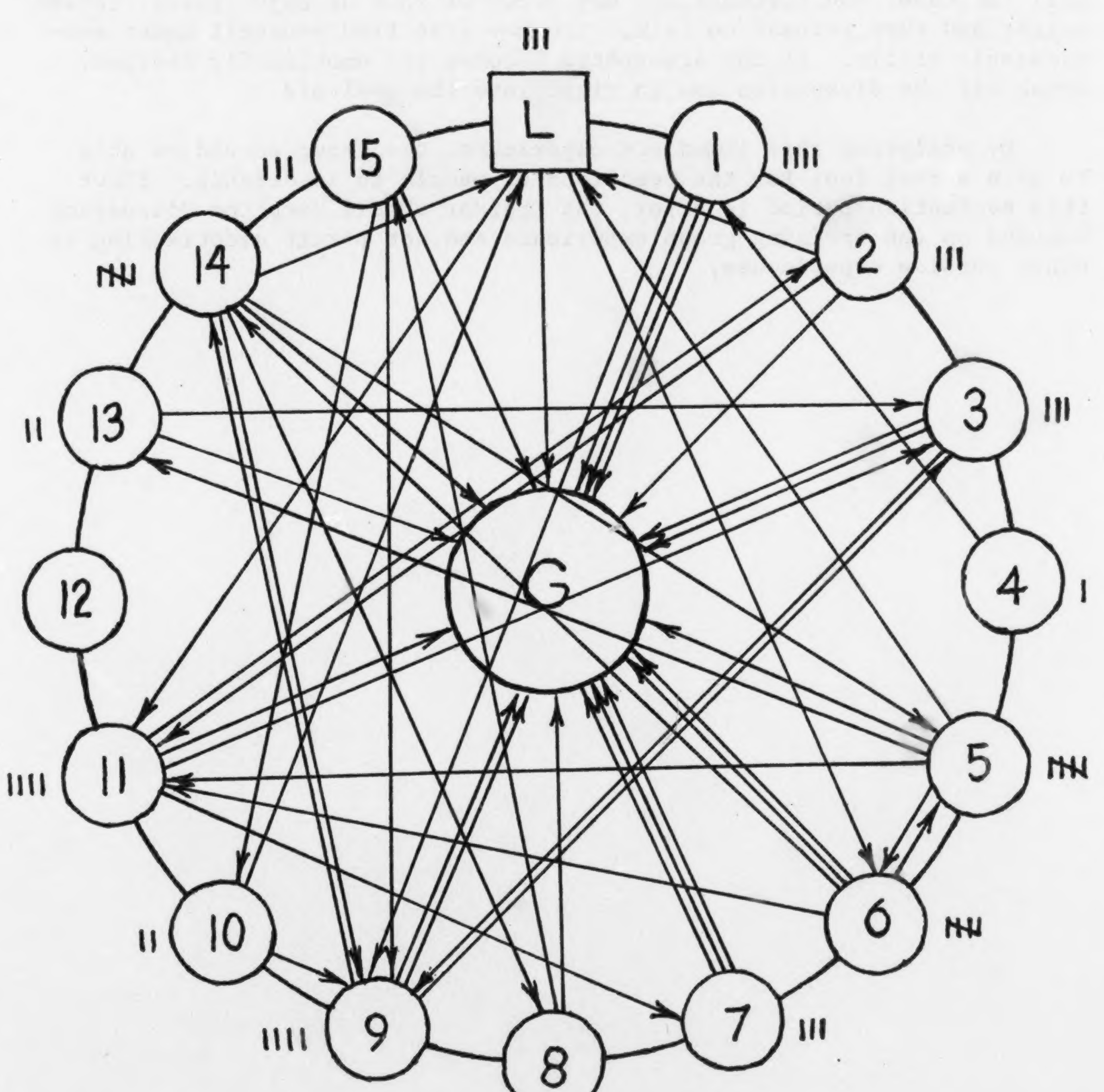
This session will help to sharpen the focus on the relation between the actions of the leader and the participation of group members. The trainer has the job of modeling two sharply different leadership styles for the group and helping them to evaluate the differences between them in terms of how the group responded. The session also constitutes an introduction to an overall view of participation, and a method of analyzing and evaluating it.

Merely knowing the effects of leadership on participation is not enough for real understanding. The impact of leadership must be experienced to be understood. This demonstration is an attempt to give the group a "feel" for the basic differences in highly demanding and permissive styles of leadership by relating feelings as group members to the two kinds of leadership provided. The demonstration also encoureges the view that personality or habit do not necessarily fix people's behavior. It can be changed by them if they see the need for change.

Another point which must be made with the group is that the inexperienced leader, in striving to be "permissive," often abdicates responsibility for leadership entirely and lets the discussion drift helplessly. The trainer can usefully raise this problem at several points, and particularly at the end of the session during evaluation of the practice discussions.

If the group becomes involved in the demanding discussion, tension will increase, and irritability may occur or lack of objectivity, raised voices and even refusal to talk. You may also find yourself under considerable strain. If the atmosphere becomes too emotionally charged, break off the dissussion and go right into the analysis.

By analyzing this immediate experience, the group should be able to gain a real feel for the reactions of people to leadership. Since this evaluation period is brief, the trainer should keep the discussion focused on the training group experience and not permit sidetracking to other outside experiences.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Example of a Participation Chart

INSTRUCTIONS TO OBSERVER

The job of the observer will be to chart the flow of discussion, noting who talks (leader or group member) and to whom (leader, particular member, group as a whole). Even though your group may sit at a square or oblong table, a circular form makes it easier to put in the arrows.

Directions:

After leader's opening remarks, begin recording each contribution made. Draw an arrow from the circle representing the speaker to the person addressed if leader or group member. If a remark is addressed to the group as a whole, draw an arrow to the center of the circle to indicate that the remark was directed to the group rather than to an individual. Also tally individual contributions separately as indicated in the sample diagram to facilitate analysis.

Following the analysis of leadership style by the group, you will be asked to report on group participation on the basis of your diagrams. Report to the following questions:

1. How freely did members participate? Did everybody contribute? Did just a few members contribute? Did most members contribute?
2. Did some people do more talking than others? Did anyone talk too much?
3. Are the most loquacious people sitting together and the relatively silent ones also?
4. Did members talk mostly to the leader? (notice how the lines converge)
5. Was talking directed to particular members rather than to the group as a whole?
6. Was there any pairing or evidence of cliques?

OBSERVATION SHEET

Participation

1. To what extent did the group concentrate its efforts on the assigned discussion task?

_____were at work most of the time
_____worked, but some time spent in talking about other things
_____spent a good deal of time on other things

2. If there were times when the group did not work well, what may have been the reason?

_____were fighting over irrelevancies
_____were being sociable, joking, etc.
_____got off on irrelevant personal experiences
_____were frustrated

3. Most of the talking was done by

_____group as a whole
_____a few members
_____the leader

4. So far as guiding the discussion is concerned, the leader

_____shared guidance with the group
_____managed it mostly himself
_____provided no guidance

5. Differing points of view were

_____acknowledged and considered impartially
_____acknowledged, but not considered objectively
_____neither acknowledged nor considered

6. Members participated in ways which helped make the discussion productive

_____by encouraging other members to contribute
_____by calling attention to points of agreement or disagreement
_____by summarizing
_____by attempting to clarify
_____by introducing new points for consideration
_____by bringing the group back to the subject
_____by trying to resolve conflicts

6. Members participated in ways which helped make the discussion productive.

_____by encouraging other members to contribute
_____by calling attention to points of agreement or disagreement
_____by summarizing
_____by attempting to clarify
_____by introducing new points for consideration
_____by bringing the group back to the subject
_____by trying to resolve conflicts

7. The goals of the discussion were

_____clearly set by the leader
_____developed by leader and members of the group
_____indefinite and uncertain

8. The general climate during the discussion was

_____rather tense, people not at ease
_____quite relaxed, people quite at ease
_____fairly relaxed
_____such that few people were stimulated to participate
_____such that participation and involvement came naturally and generally.

PARTICIPATION

How are INDIVIDUAL WORDS AND Individual ROLES Important in Creating Effective Discussion Groups?

The group is composed of individuals, each of whom brings to the communicative situation motivation, background and personality characteristics that are unique and different. Although each individual differs in some way from the others, all participants have something in common, an area of common purpose which has initially drawn them together. There may be a common desire for communication, an interest in the same subject matter, a preference for learning among others rather than as a solitary individual in the library.

> Leader must understand the underlying needs of the individuals in the group if he is to deal effectively with the manifestations of these needs as evidenced by the "silent member," the "monoplizer," the "obstructionist," or the "tangential talker."
>
> Leader must understand and appreciate how different kinds of questions call for, and determine different kinds of discussion and analysis. Some simple rules for creating a desired climate can involve the members in discussing various methods of phrasing and asking of questions.
>
> Effective discussion and the climate necessary for productive thinking require that a number of different roles must be performed by members of the group, as well as by the leader. An analysis of the roles and situations which assist or obstruct the work of the group should be made.

There are many roles which people play in the life stream of any community. These roles are related to the social values and ethics of the social entity as well as the individual's perceived self-relation to that society. The roles people play are in response to the social rules which maintain that society and which become dramatized and individualistic versions of the mores.

The rules of the social game are sometimes referred to as etiquette, a polite version of the deeply imbedded socialization which has taken place in the individual. Communicative activity in a group situation heightens the necessity of social rules as well as places an imperative upon each participant to practice them effectively. Each member of the discussion group is constantly engaged in dealing with two kinds of problems:

Efforts to achieve his conscious purpose for being there--learning to appreciate literature, become a more knowledgeable citizen, sharpen his thinking.

Efforts to resolve his hidden problems of adapting to other people, of anxiety about what other members think of him, and subduing inclinations towards flight.

One main purpose of the individual, that of adapting to the other members in ways which satisfy his emotional needs, gets handled on a level which is difficult for the discussion leader to influence. People tend to develop behaviors which meet their needs and then cling to them, whether they make other people unhappy or not and whether they get in the way of constructive work or not.

But the individual has a second purpose: his identified purpose of learning more about some subject, increasing his ability to think, improving himself in some way. These two purposes may complement each other but they may also come in conflict. Satisfying some emotional need may interfere with the achievement of a self-educational aim.

Since the individual shares his educational aims with other members of the group, it is useful to think of the group also as having needs, needs for certain kinds of behavior necessary to accomplish its work. For example, each member of the group needs to understand what other members are saying. All members expect to have an opportunity to challenge or to help develop an idea. All members expect that persons who continually impede effective thinking will be dealt with and that a climate will be created which will permit them to participate.

In this view of participation, then, one can think of any individual contribution to the discussion as satisfying one of two different kinds of needs. Both individual and group needs are met by some action of an individual. Such actions are roles which people play in a group.

An individual, emotional need of one of the members may, for example, he to gain status, or to find security by dominating.

A group need for accomplishing the work necessary to reach a common goal may for example, be the harmonizing of different points of view or the clarification of a confusing situation.

Anything the leader does to reduce those elements in the group which create anxieties will decrease to some extent that behavior which is an expression of irrelevant individual needs. A permissive, friendly, accepting climate will, paradoxically, inclease the ability of the group to concentrate on the problem at hand. The leader can very often use the irrelevant expressions which occur as an indicator of the state of the discussion. A puzzling or disruptive contribution by one member may really be an expression of the way the whole group feels at that time.

A hot argument which the group permits to continue may signal some sort of frustration felt by the group and be taken out by it in general enjoyment of the fight. In the same way, an irrelevant remark may indicate that the group is not clear about what kind of contribution is appropriate at the time. A confused contribution may mean that the group has really no clear idea of its purpose in going into a particular phase of the discussion. The leader can help the discussion over many rough spots if he is alert to the significance of individual behavior for the feelings of the entire group.

In any group one can expect to find a number of different roles being played. Some of them coincide with the group's need to get the job done, and therefore help the discussion (the harmonizer, the encourager, the clarifier). Other roles serve only individual needs without coinciding with the group need, and tend to hinder the discussion (the aggressor, the special interest pleader). During the discussion try to be alert to the character of the roles being played by the participants, but act, yourself, as you normally do in a discussion.

The dead silence is the most general, and often the most anxiety-producing problem. The awakward silence is a complete absence of participation. It is important for the leader to realize that this probably reflects a wish on the part of the members to be prodded and relieved of responsibility. This is precisely what the leader should avoid doing. While there is no "right" way to handle such silences, there are a few wrong ways. The leader should not try to prod individuals into talking, or remain silent hemself so that the situation turns into a contest of wills.

The leader can wait and see whether someone starts off, using his own judgment as to just how long a wait is sensible. Encouraging remarks can break the ice such as "There are probably some different points of view on this that would be interesting to get out on the table." If it persists, it is a good idea to turn attention to the problem of process by asking: "What seems to be blocking us?" or "Maybe we had better find out what the trouble is?"

The over-talkative member talks all the time or goes on endlessly. If permitted, he will monopolize the discussion. Usually a person who talks compulsively has a need to dominate. If you recognize this need, you will probably be less irritated by the behavior and better able to handle the situation. Since the group must be protected from domination by any one member, the leader should intervene if the group does not try to prevent it.

If a participant is monopolizing the time which should be shared among the other members, the leader can interrupt, acknowledge the contribution, and suggest that "we hear from some other members who, I am sure, also have something to say about this." Usually consistent intervention of this kind will be sufficient to make a member aware of what he is doing and better able to control his need to talk. When the problem cannot be resolved satisfactorily, it can be discussed with the whole group in an evaluation session avoiding reference to any particular member.

The silent member is usually shy and fearful. He is afraid of being put on the spot, or being forced to participate. If he is pressured into taking an active part, he will rightfully feel resentful. It is wise never to force, but rather to let him take his time about contributing. You can, however, continue to observe silent members to detect signs of readiness to speak.

If a member seems to be on the verge of speaking, an encouraging glance or friendly nod may be all he needs. Sometimes a brief chat after the meeting will let a member know that the group is interested in hearing from him when he is ready. This can help make him feel freer to participate the next time. There is no one way of encouraging participation. Occasionally, silence may reflect boredom or lack of interest. If you are fairly sure that this is the case, you might wish to draw out the participant by asking him a provocative and challenging question.

Asking questions tends to stimulate participation and brings out many members of the group. The leader will want to ask the kind of questions and state them in such a manner that even the most reluctant member of the group will feel that he can make a contribution. As the program develops and such a climate has been developed, the leader will probably think more of using questions which will stimulate intelligent and logical thinking. Certain kinds of questions help to stimulate maximum participation:

Ask questions which do not put people on the spot by checking the amount or type of information that they have on a particular point. Questions which put people on the spot will drag out only the members of the group who have a store of facts and information and will inhibit the others.

Use questions which do not merely call for a "yes or no" or "agree or disagree" answer. "Yes or no" questions do not stimulate discussion and merely set a pattern for members of the group who feel that their role is one of being led or misled by the leader.

Ask questions which are simple, clear and concise rather than vague and wide-open so that members of the group know what you want them to discuss. This will avoid confusion and will stimulate general participation.

Select questions which deal with experiences which any member of the group might discuss or with opinions about some subject emphasizing that everyone's opinion is of interest or importance. At the beginning of a program it may be well to go entirely around the table and solicit opinions or experiences of group members. In this way everyone in the group can make some contribution (no matter how small) and will have the experience of participation. Since the first attempt to say something is frequently the most difficult, this procedure provides a built-in method which permits everyone to take part.

In stimulating participation it is especially important that the leader accept the contributions made by all of the members. He should try to tie them into the general trend of discussion and give each member the feeling that he really has contributed something to the thinking of the group. This will be effective in letting all the members feel that they have made a worthwhile contribution. It will also help to set a climate of acceptance which will stimulate further participation, and the development of logical reasoning and effective learning.

Relating these rules to the needs of individual members of the group, it is important for the leader at least in the beginning, to ask questions which relate to, and satisfy the individual emotional needs of the members. As the program progresses and members feel that they belong to the group and have become a part of it, the leader can ask increasingly the kinds of questions which relate to group needs for accomplishing the work necessary to reach a common goal.

The effectiveness of a discussion group depends on the roles which members fill whether these be helpful or obstructive. The purpose of this analysis helps in distinguishing roles from personalities. If, instead of thinking about "problem people," you concentrate on how certain kinds of behavior contribute or do not contribute to the discussion, your own action as a leader is likely to be more objective and therefore, more effective. People do not, in any event, play the same role at all times in a group, although we have a tendency to **stereotype people in such roles.**

Demonstration Discussion:

Proceed with any discussion which has been scheduled. But be careful as you do this session. When you think of a role which was present, do not think of the person who played it as always playing it. After the demonstration discussion, the group should individually fill out the rating sheet, checking the roles which they think were present.

Read the statement given in the chart, "Role Description," of each role. Check whether you feel it was present or absent in the demonstration discussion which you have just gone through. You will find that some of the roles always assist the group, that others consistently hinder the group. On the other hand, watch especially for some roles which at one point seem to hander the work or development of the group (because of a different situation at that time.)

Now proceed to the chart, "Role Description," and check those roles which were present. If the role was performed by the leader alone, enter an 'L' in the appropriate column. If the role was performed by a member of the group, check with a 'G' and if by both enter 'GL' in the appropriate place. Do you feel that the group was successful in accomplishing its major tasks during this discussion?

Were any important roles missing which, if they had been present, would have helped the discussion?

Were the various important roles fairly well shared by leader and group or were most of them performed by one or the other?

Were roles present which you think the group would have done better without?

Is it possible that the same kind of role can assist the group at one point and hinder it at another? Why?

How can you, as a leader, make sure that the roles which you recognize as needed get filled in the group?

GROUP ROLE BEHAVIORS

ROLE DESCRIPTION	Assisted Group	Hindered Group	Sometimes Assisted Sometimes Hindered
Brings discussion back to the point			
Seeks further opinions from the group			
Seeks clarification of meaning when ideas expressed are not clear			
Introduces new angles or aspects of topic for consideration			
Summarizes or makes transition to a new point			
Points out areas of disagreement and agreement			
Tries to clarify conflict in the group			
Evaluates progress of the group			
Introduces facts or information			
Seeks further information			
Probes for the reasons behind opin-			
Aggressively expresses disapproval of acts or feelings of others			

Calls attention to himself through boating or recounting personal achievements, or consistently irrelevant contribution		
Makes a display of lack of interest in group's job through horseplay, cynicism, etc.		
Tries to assert authority or superiority by giving directions authoritatively, interrupting the contributions of others, etc.		
Tries to evoke "sympathy" response by expressions of insecurity, depreciation of himself beyone "reason"		
Hides his own prejudices or biases from the group by pleading for stereotypes like "the small businessman," "grassroots community," "labor," etc.		
Attacks the group or the problem it is working on		
Disagrees or opposes without or beyond "reason"		
Attempts to maintain or bring back an issue after the group has rejected it.		

OBSERVATION SHEET

I. During the Practice Discussion, what proportion of the time was spent on

_______work and discussion which concerned itself with the question raised by the leader and the major aims of the discussion?

_______efforts to resolve hidden problems of adapting to people, anxiety about relationships, and the like?

2. Were the questions as presented in the Manual and interpreted by the leader such that

_______they clarified the area of discussion and pointed up the problem to be discussed?

_______they presented a "loaded" questions which called for a certain kind of answer?

_______they were fuzzy and indefinite so that considerable time had to be spent deciding what the discussion should really be about?

3. Most of the talking was done by

_______the group as a whole

_______a few members.

_______the leader.

4. So far as guiding the discussion is concerned, the leader

_______shared guidance with the group.

_______managed it mostly himself.

_______provided no guidance.

5. Were most of the important leadership roles filled

_______by the leader?

_______by members of the group?

_______by neither of them?

6. The goals of the discussion were

_______clearly set by the leader.

_______developed by the leader and the members of the group.

_______indefinite and uncertain.

7. Were the individual needs of group members

_______recognized in any way by the leader?

_______rejected by the leader?

Explain manner in which leader handled or did not________________

8. Were there any specific instances in which either the leader or the group dealt with any difficult member roles during the discussion?

____

If so, give examples____

CONTENT AND MATERIALS

How do Content and Subject-Matter Affect Leadership and Membership?

The content and purpose provide a focus for the group effort. Every group is organized around or within some specific content and has a goal which involves that content for some purpose. If the group is really working toward an accepted goal, then information has some relevance to all of its deliberations. Information may make different demands on both the group and its initial leaders, and as such it is an important determinant on the effectiveness of the group effort:

> Effective results occur in any group situation when the leader permits the group to concern itself with both the "work" and "non-work" aspects of the situation. Social (non-work) needs must be fulfilled as well as Content (work) needs in any group.
>
> Leader must be sensitive to the non-work needs of a group and should permit outlets for such needs to achieve the basic goals of learning and thinking.
>
> Subject areas (factual as compared to opinion) call for different kinds of leadership styles and responsibilities, as well as different kinds of member participation. The leader must understand the various content and subject matter sufficiently to fit his style to the demands of program.

Even though librarians have always maintained that their role is one of information supply, their professional activity exhibits a lack of dynamic interface. Conceived as a simple transfer process, data is supplied to the individual requesting it or a display is arranged that is presumed to relate to the interests of the group. Rarely is information considered as the dynamic interface of developmental counseling or of group development. The potential of both the American Heritage and Library-Community Projects remains largely unrealized in the profession.

In addition to these roles which help to strengthen and maintain group life and activities, there are other roles which relate to the other major component of communicative activity in the group: content. The flow of information (i.e. the surprise value of content) has to be presented and monitored until it engenders a teachable moment in the group. Content "care and feeding" requires a great deal of skill. There are few participants and librarians especially who do not need **extensive** practice in the following task roles:

INITIATING ACTIVITY: proposing solutions, suggesting new ideas, new definitions of the problem, new approaches to the problem or a new organization of materials.

SEEKING INFORMATION: asking for clarification of suggestions, requesting additional information or facts,

SEEKING OPINION: looking for an expression of feeling about something from the members, seeking clarification of values, suggestions or ideas.

GIVING INFORMATION: offering facts or generalizations, relating one's own experience to the group problem to illustrate points.

GIVING OPINION: stating an opinion or belief concerning a suggestion or one of several suggestions, particularly concerning its value rather than its factual basis.

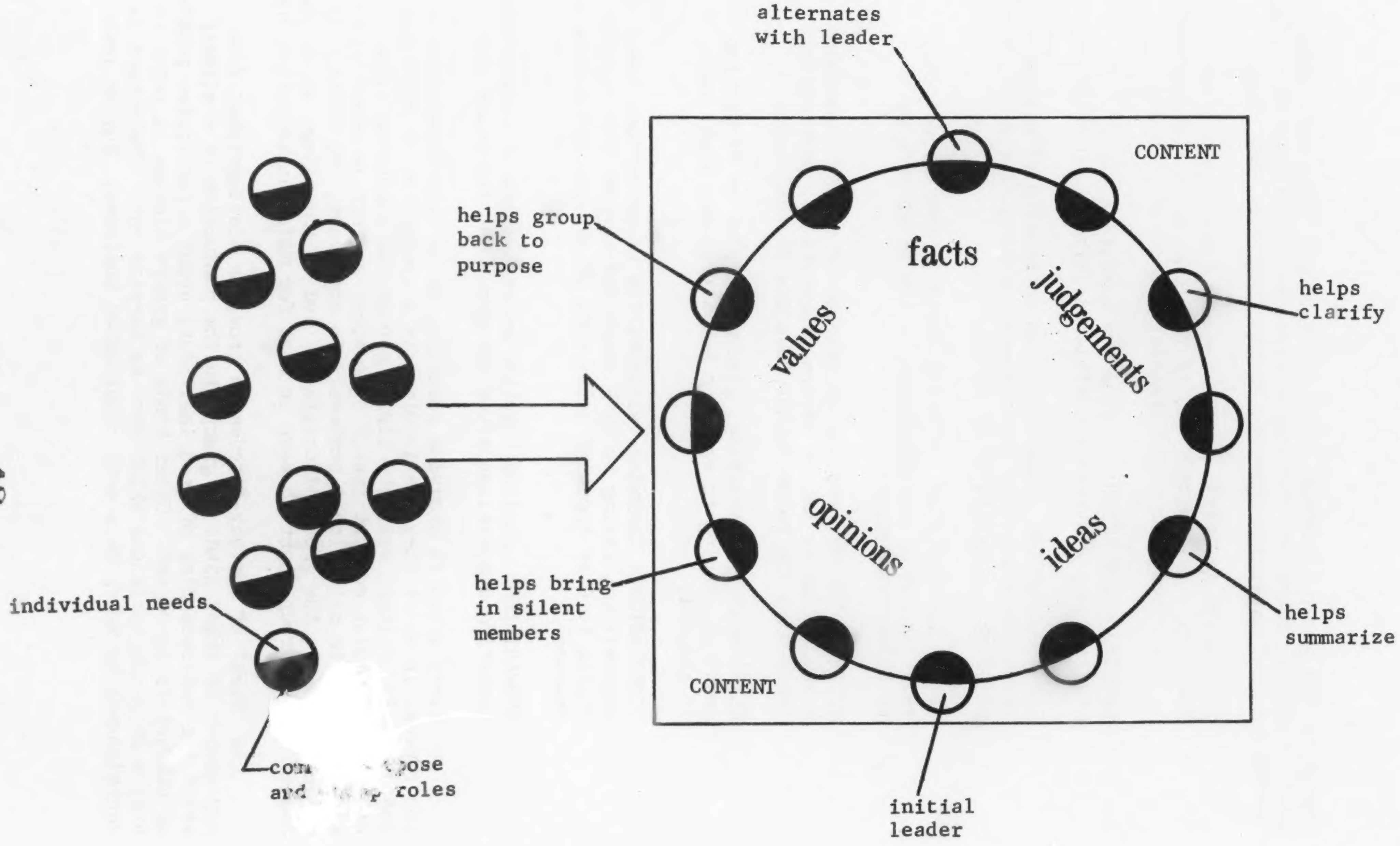
ELABORATING: clarifying, giving examples or developing meanings, trying to envision how a proposal might work if adopted.

COORDINATING: showing relationships among various ideas or suggestions, trying to pull ideas and suggestions together, trying to draw together activities of various sub-groups or members.

SUMMARIZING: pulling together related ideas or suggestions, restating suggestions after the group has discussed them.

Every group is studying something be it only themselves or the process in which they are involved in a counseling or psychiatric session. In healthy, selfactualizing groups the something being studied is subject content itself or subject content in relation to some problem, or situational context. In any event, the content is always unique to the group discussing it and to the things which the leader or the group ought to keep in mind for doing an effective job.

The "work" of a study-discussion group as distinguished from any number of other kinds of groups is the production of a climate in which the understanding of each individual about a particular problem or subject is increased. Other kinds of groups discuss in order to arrive at group decisions which must be carried out. Their work is decision-making which is a very complicated business. But no less


alternates with leader
CONTENT
helps group back to purpose
facts
judgements
helps clarify
values
opinions
ideas
helps bring in silent members
helps summarize
individual needs
CONTENT
com[illegible]pose and [illegible] roles
initial leader

complicated is the work of the study group working to achieve knowledge or understanding.

The problems which arise when thinking is done in a group, instead of by an individual, are similar to the problems of doing any kind of work in a group. A group of men who decide to build a community tennis court, for instance, have first of all agreed on a certain order to work. All of these activities, including the reaching of agreements of various sorts, are work. They move the group along toward the goal of a finished tennis court.

At times the working group may get tired and start kidding around. Or, two members who have a private fued may have an argument that not only keeps them from working but stops the work of the whole crew. Or, they may all just knock off for a well-deserved beer and exchange sociable opinions about which team has the best chance in the world series. During all these periods whether the lapse is necessary or unnecessary, the group is not working, but doing something else: socializing, fighting, escaping, or whatever you want to call it. Discussion groups, in a rather more complicated fashion, can be looked at in the same way. If the group is talking about what it ought to do or how it should go about doing it, or is actually exploring problems it has agreed to consider as a group, it is working:

> No matter how well-motivated the group is nor interested in the topic at hand, there will always be some periods when it is not working but is letting off steam, relaxing or dealing with personal and emotional problems.
>
> Periods of not working are necessary and essential to the further development of a group. They deal with the personal, social, and emotional needs which are bound to develop in a permissive situation.
>
> If a group is not working at a particular time there is a reason for this behavior. The leader must try to understand the reasons underlying this flight from work and be sensitive to them: 1) Do they have different understandings of what they are trying to do? 2) Is the particular discussion over their heads and are they unable to cope with it? 3) Is the group frustrated over the behavior of some member and does it feel that it is unable to deal with this member adequately? 4) Or, have they just been sitting so long that their minds are unable to absorb more than their seats can endure?

> Leader must try not to recall the members too sternly to the task. He cannot too rapidly try to change their behavior from one which is probably necessary and important at the time. It is his task to understand what is causing the nonwork situation and to work with the members of the group to eradicate the cause (frustration, weariness, irritation) rather than deal with the manifestation (the joke, the argument) directly.

Group activity is always focused on something. Encounter, transactional or integrity groups may be used for clinical and therapeutic purposes and as such have "psychological" content as opposed to the subject content of the librarian sponsored group. The interest of the group may center upon a wide variety of content: novels or other works of the imagination, essays or opinion oriented material, factually oriented sciences, and the exposition of conceptual material. In any event, librarians are adept at least humanistically in the content analysis of materials. However important content analysis may be initially, it is not of itself sufficient for communication. The content of the work will need to be analyzad for its potential value in promoting discussion.

The problems which the leader faces in order to help the group solve its work problems are shaped by the kind of work to be done as well as by the kinds of questions posed by the content being discussed. A group of librarians trying to put together a radio show give a very different impression at their work from that of the library board at an annual meeting. Their tasks are completely different and make different demands on them in order to get the work done. Similarly, a discussion of the library in the community will be different, at least to the person leading it, from a discussion of United States foreign policy. Not only is the way in which the group must work different, but the way in which it does not work will tend to differ also.

Group A is involved in a discussion of family and parent-child relationships. The problem of parent-child relations is so close to home that all members of the group can personalize the discussion. They will talk in terms of opinions and attitudes more than in terms of rigid facts or detailed information. They cannot help but become personally involved.

In this situation the leader will work to build an atmosphere of acceptance and a strong group feeling which will provide acceptance for emotional statements and for personal feelings, which are bound to arise in such a discussion. He will probably permit considerable freedom, checked primarily by the group itself, so that group members can discuss what is really of concern and of interest to them.

Group B is discussing problems of library-community relations. The problem of library-community relations is, they realize, a serious one but few of them will personalize it. It will probably become apparent that there is a need for more facts and information, that **opposing positions and points of view which are generally held** and actual occurrences which have taken place must be further studied before useful and intelligent opinions and points of view can be arrived at or defended.

In this situation the leader will, of course, be concerned about an accepting and permissive atmosphere, but he will also be concerned about ensuring that the members of the group check their ideas and opinions against facts, that they seek to document their statements, and that they refer to sources of information. The leader's role in this discussion will, of necessity, be much more one of challenging unsound ideas and impressions and of probing for, and demanding, facts and information than in the previous more opinion-centered discussion.

Demonstration Discussions:

The first part of the demonstration discussion is a brief discussion by the entire group of the branch library's role in the neighborhood, i.e. Group B above. The important thing about this question is that there is a professional answer to it. To discuss it in a group helps everyone correct "mistaken" notions he has, and helps everyone understand the "limits" of the librarian's role. But it is not, ultimately, a matter of opinion even though to some extent, professional answers **may have to be mediated by neighborhood conditions.**

Considerable time, therefore, must be spent by the group on learning and understanding the relationships which operate. The usefulness of the discussion will depend on how closely the group keeps to the materials provided. Of course personal experience has its place, but in this kind of discussion it is important to realize the limitations of single cases.

The leader should take care to see to it that the group does not dash too hurriedly into arguments over opinions without looking first at the facts of the situation. Or he may, in another group, face the problem of everyone settling down to a dead-level consideration of facts only, which is boring for many members. The boredom may be expressed in horseplay, irrelevancies, or other forms of non-work and emotional activity. A change of pace may be necessary, or for an exchange of more personal experience. The following questions may be used for analysis:

What special kind of responsibility was the leader called upon to perform?

How close did the group stay to the material?

How interested and involved was the group?

What proportion of time was spent on "work" and what proportion on "non-work" during the discussion?

Did the group have enough facts to warrant their decisions?

How much disagreement and conflict was there? Due to what?

The second part of the demonstration should be a brief discussion of an issue in which opinions and values are of great importance. Many discussion programs are designed not to settle arguments or increase understandings of the meaning of certain facts, but to excite discussion, provoke inquiry, and inspire critical thought. This discussion therefore is **similar to that of Group A identified above.** Here the greatest danger is that the discussion might easily become a kind of bullsession, or devote itself to the unloading of opinions by everyone in the group without critical examination of any of them. Very often it becomes a matter of venting "'tis" **against**""'taint". Because there is a wide range of views on the issues under discussion, a preliminary exploration of the whole range of opinion or values on the question is probably better than settling down immediately to the discussion of extreme views.

This kind of encounter can be very disturbing for a group which is not conscious of a very definite goal for its discussion. The leader may have to keep the group continually aware of whether it is, at some given time, doing what it really intended to so in the discussion. In this type of discussion, when the group is "not-working" it is likely to be fighting. The issues under discussion often strike deeply at people's political or moral values. The leader might have to consider changing the activity (coffee breaks, time out) for a while. The following questions may be used for analysis:

In what ways did group participation differ from the previous discussion (in terms of how interested people seemed to be, their use of personal experience, the amount of conflict, or how close the group stayed to material)?

What proportion of the time was spent in the "work" and "non-work" aspects of discussion? Was there any significant difference in this respect between this and the last discussion?

In what ways did the behavior of the leader differ? (How much direction did he feel he had to give; how much did he participate; were the kinds of questions he asked different)?

OBSERVATION SHEET

1. During the practice discussions, what proportion of the time was spent

_____on "work" aspects

_____on "non-work" aspects

2. Do you feel that too much or too little time was spent on the "non-work" aspects of the meeting?______________________________

_____clearly set by the leader

_____developed by the leader and the members of the group

_____indefinite and uncertain

3. During the practice session did the leader

_____permit fairly free and general discussion of opinions and ideas

_____hold the group rather specifically and rigidly to the content of the reading

Did you feel that the leadership style and the climate was appropriate for the kind of content being discussed?____________

In what ways might the leadership styles have been more appropriate for the content and subject matter?______________________

4. Did you feel that the practice discussion

_____made sufficient use of factual material available

_____not enough use of factual material

_____was tied too closely to factual material

5. Most of the talking was done by

_____group as a whole

_____a few members

_____the leader

6. So far as guiding the discussion is concerned, the leader

   _____shared guidance with the group

   _____managed it mostly himself

   _____provided no guidance

7. Were the questions as presented in the Manual and interpreted by the leader such that

   _____they clarified the area of discussion and pointed up the problem to be discussed

   _____they presented a "loaded" question which called for a predetermined answer

   _____they were fuzzy and indefinite so that considerable time had to be spend deciding what the discussion should really be about

8. Were there any specific instances in which either the leader or the group dealt with any difficult member roles?_______________

   If so, give examples____

SECTION TWO

The WHAT of group activity includes those topics which deal with the problems involved in communicating ideas, acquiring concepts and information as well as thinking.

Communication

Strategy

Tactics

COMMUNICATION

What Can be Done to Improve Communication?

The previous elements of the group process (leadership, group, content) have focused on the methods which the leader and participants could use to increase the quality and quantity of participation. Of necessity, greater attention has been given on how things were being said and on how feelings and relations were developed in the group. Major attention has been paid to the climate of the group, the leader-group relations and the interrelations among group members.

However, the central problem of communication in group activity must also be considered. What are participants saying and how does this saying contribute to the communicative process? No one participant can think with another person unless he understands the other person's meaning. In order to do so, each participant must practice the "leadership" functions to the best of his ability.

> Members of the group must be willing, and able to listen to and understand each other if any effective communication is to be developed in the encounter program. The leader must help to initiate specific functions to ensure that meaningful communication is present.
>
> Leader must consciously provide situations which test the degree of communication so that members of the group can be conscious of the importance of listening and understanding. One major task of the leader and of the group must be the improvement of communication within the encounter activity.
>
> Members of the group must be willing not only to listen but also to make their contributions in terms and in language which can be understood by others, to relate their contributions to the subject under discussion and to explain apparently unrelated ideas and contributions. The leader can make use of other group members to observe the effectiveness of communication and to call for clarification where there is a lack of understanding.

Librarians since they so often limit their professional services to individuals need extensive experience in supplying information to a group and in monitoring its flow in the communicative encounter.

Group work should become a daily activity of the librarian in order to improve his professional helpfulness not only to groups but also to the individual. As important as the group maintenance and task roles are, there are others which combine these skills. The following leadership roles are most often practiced initially by a designated leader until various participants can undertake them:

> EVALUATING: submitting group decisions or accomplishments to comparison with group standards, measuring accomplishments against goals.
>
> DIAGNOSING: determining sources of difficulties, appropriate steps to take next and analyzing the main blocks to progress.
>
> TESTING FOR CONSENSUS: tentatively asking for group opinions in order to find out whether the group is nearing consensus on a decision or sending up trial balloons to test group opinions.
>
> MEDIATING: harmonizing, conciliating differences in points of view, making compromise solutions.
>
> RELIEVING TENSION: draining off negative feeling by jesting or pouring oil on troubled waters, or by putting a tense situation in wider context.

A simple failure to listen is a frequent cause of misunderstanding in any encounter group. People get so preoccupied by their own thoughts, or by what they want to say next, that they really do not pay attention to the person who is talking. The leader can help by paying close attention himself thus presenting a good model for the others, and by pointing out the difficulty when one person begins to answer what another has not said.

Probably the greatest difficulty in communication, though, is simply the language we speak. It is a rich language, but its very richness means that it is full of double meanings, subtle meanings, and emotional over tones. Unfortunately, people tend to feel that the words they use have fixed meanings which are the same for everybody. But the meaning which people attach to such words as "worker" or "employer", for example, depend a great deal on their own individual experience with the reality signified by words, i.e. the contextual referent.

The leader can help in clarifying apparent or real conflict in the group by making certain that the words people use have the same general meaning for everyone in the group. He should not hesitate to question a group member to find out what he really means, or to ask him to explain more concretely if there is any doubt as to his meaning. This is a fairly simple prescription for a complicated problem. The difficulty lies not in knowing what to do but in knowing when it needs to be done.

The English language permits us to move from very concrete objects (that cow named Bessie) to livestock, to farm assets, to wealth. Sometimes we get so abstract that we can carry on a fine discussion about a word like "freedom" without even knowing what kind of "freedom" everyone has in mind. Do we mean freedom from stone walls and bars? Or freedom to start a business and run it without interference? Or the freedom of anyone to buy a five million dollar newspaper? Or, the freedom of everyone including millionaires, to sleep on park benches.

One of the constant tasks of the discussion leader is to clarify, to be alert to statements that seem meaningless, confused, off the point, or ambiguous. A common symptom of fuzziness can be recognized when two or three people, one after the other, say essentially the same thing, in a way that indicates that they are unaware that it has already been said. This may merely express the desire to get into the act, but it may also indicate a failure to listen or a continuous failure to have points made clear and understandable.

The leader may try to help, in these cases, by restating what the person has said, or by pointing out similarities in a number of statements and suggesting what is common to them. But, there is a danger lurking in such a procedure. Be careful that you do not put ideas into other people's heads. If you are not sure that you have caught the essence of a confusing statement, ask the person to clarify instead of trying to state it in your own terms.

Many people have difficulty in communicating to one another when their basic values, what they think is good or bad, and right or wrong, are sharply different. When values are held emotionally, and are bound to feelings, people may become defensive as their values are questioned or challenged. Keeping the discussion on a relatively objective level becomes very difficult. It is important for the leader to recognize value conflicts and urge the group to examine the consequences of holding the various values under question, rather than continuing to state and restate them. When the group's difficulty seems to involve a problem of communication, it may be that:

People are not paying attention to what is being said.

They may be using the same words to mean different things.

They may be applying the same abstract term to different realities.

They may not be making themselves clear.

There may be a fundamental difference in the values they hold.

Demonstration Discussion:

This demonstration will consist of two separate discussions, led by the trainer. One of them is designed to dramatize the difficulty of listening well enough to really understand people. The second is intended to demonstrate the need of using abstractions carefully.

The material for the encounter activity in this session involves a question of fundamental values, a question on which people have very different feelings. Discussing a problem involving value judgements will provide experience for the group in handling some of the communication difficulties which are likely to arise out of differences in attitude. Discussion which gets down to the level of basic values will give the whole group an opportunity to practice clear thinking.

Listen carefully, and ask members to clarify their meaning when it is not clear what meaning is intended. For example, the questions of an advocacy role for the branch librarian or of lay control of the branches should illustrate very well the tendency to be literally "deaf" to what other people are saying, because one is so busy preparing a reply or preoccupied with his own line of thought. Probably half of the complaints which discussion leaders have about a discussion "not getting anywhere", or "being so confused", would vanish if people really paid attention to one another.

This demonstration is a game to dramatize that one of the major sources of communication difficulty is a failure to listen carefully enough to what other people are saying. Although the rules of the game--restating in your own words what the previous person speaking has said before you can say anything--is likely to make the discussion cumbersome and will slow it down considerably, the device has dramatic learning value.

For this discussion the group is to play a game, which has only one rule: Before any member of the group can make a statement or ask a question, he must first state, in his own words, the point made by the person who spoke before him, to that person's satisfaction. Ten minutes of discussion should be sufficient to make the point. Unless the group is eager to continue, discussion should probably be cut at this time to prevent undue frustration:

> How helpful do you think this exercise was in aiding you to understand one another?
>
> Is there any way in which this kind of experience might be applied to your own group to improve communication?

This part of the session is designed to demonstrate, that if sufficient care is taken during a discussion to seek clarification of abstractions, communication among the group may be considerably enhanced. Webster defines "abstract" as "used without reference to a thing or things; expressing a quality apart from any object; general as opposed to particular."

The danger of such abstract terms as "advocacy" is not that they are abstract, but that they are often not explained by the events or things in the real world to which they refer. The following exchange helps to isolate and examine some of the difficulties which commonly arise from discussing abstractions. For example:

> What do you mean by advocacy?
> Advocacy means the preservation of human rights.
> What do you mean by rights?
> By rights I mean those privileges God grants all of us--
> I mean man's inherent privileges.
> Such as?
> Liberty, for example.
> What do you mean by liberty?
> Religious and political freedom.
> And what does that mean?
> Religious and political freedom is what we have when
> librarians work as advocates for people.

The job of the observer during this discussion is to make sure that the group is not operating with abstractions which mean different things to different members of the group. He is to backstop the leader, to make sure that this course of misunderstanding, at least, is constantly clarified. The directions for the observer included:

> Interrupt and ask for concrete examples of all abstract terms, such as "needs of society", "advocacy", when they seem to be creating problems or misunderstanding. Make sure that the group is certain about the particulars of the abstractions they are dealing with.

If people are talking on what seems to be different levels of abstraction, suggest that the leader find out whether this is true, and whether he can get the group to agree on precisely what they are talking about.

During the encounter the observer for the group will assist the leader by acting as a "backstop". As an observer, his job will be to watch for abstract terms which are causing, or might cause, confusion. He will have the authority to break into the discussion at any point and ask people to make clear the meaning of abstractions they are using. After the discussion session, the following questions may be raised for analysis:

How helpful to the discussion was the observer?

What application might this kind of vigilance have to your own groups?

OBSERVATION SHEET

1. Members paid attention to what others were saying

_____always
_____frequently
_____sometimes
_____rarely
_____never

2. Members understood one another

_____very well
_____fairly well
_____very little
_____not at all

3. During the practice discussion

_____members usually were talking on the same levels of abstraction
_____members were frequently talking on very different levels of abstraction
_____the level of abstraction varied considerably

4. The leader

_____usually brought the group back to a consideration of abstractions by asking for a definition of terms used
_____made little, or no, effort to clarify abstractions
_____tried to clarify abstractions but was not very successful
_____did very little in this regard, but members of the group called for clarification of abstractions.

5. This practice discussion

_____was more clear-cut and there was less fuzziness and lack of understanding than in previous discussions
_____was less clear-cut and more fuzzy than previous discussions
_____was just about the same

6. During the practice discussion what proportion of time was spent

_____on "work" aspects
_____on "non-work" aspects

How did this compare to the previous session? _______________

7. If there were times when the group did not work well, what may have been the reason?

_____were fighting over irrelevancies
_____were being sociable, joking, etc.
_____got off on irrelevant personal experiences
_____were frustrated

8. Members participated in ways which helped make the discussion productive

_____by encouraging other members to contribute
_____by calling attention to points of agreement and disagreement
_____by summarizing
_____by attempting to clarify
_____by introducing new points for consideration
_____by bringing the group back to the subject
_____by trying to resolve conflicts

STRATEGY

What Can Be Done to Clarify THINKING and To Stimulate More Effective Communicative Strategies?

Conflict can exist at any one of several levels. It is helpful for the leader to try to identify these levels during the encounter. A conflict may be on the superficial level of opinion or attitude. It may be on the level of evidence, or the meaning of facts which support the differing opinions. It may be on the deeper level of values or preferences. One difficulty to watch for occurs when a group operates at the same time on various different levels and is unaware of doing so. One person may be arguing that democracy is a wonderful thing, another person that democracy will not work.

Leader must understand the extent to which the phrasing of questions and the sequence of questions will determine the kind and level of interaction, and must plan questions in accord with his strategy for discussion. How do questions move discussion from opinions to underlying values and principles?

Leader must be prepared, and able to probe behind the statements of group members to determine the principles and values underlying the statements. The leader also must probe behind apparent areas of agreement (and disagreement) to determine the extent to which real agreement or disagreement actually does exist.

The purpose of this session is to make clear the relationship between the opinions people express and the principles from which they reason. In order to do this it is necessary to continually probe beyond opinions or conclusions to premises or reasons and still further to the principles upon which these premises are grounded. The manner in which the selection and sequence of questions can be used to clarify group thinking should be discussed. The hypothetical question selected for the demonstration should make it easier to uncover these starting principles. Since the group may not see the sense in discussing a question which has no reality basis, it is important to point out the value of hypothetical questions: they are one way of getting people to examine different alternatives and the consequences of each, without having to assess the validity of facts.

Much group activity gets into trouble right at the beginning by ignoring the need to locate precisely what issue it is they are talking about. If the discussion is about the adequacy of United States foreign policy, for example, there is not much sense in retreating behind the usual positions and arguing away.

The problem of strategy is half solved when this first step has been given enough attention, because there can be nothing quite so confusing as to talk about a number of overlapping issues as though they were the same. Once the group agrees on the issue it is discussing, the problem becomes one of exploring differing opinions. At this point conflict can be expected. Whether the conflict is translated into a constructive learning experience or deteriorates into a snarl of personal antagonisms will depend to a great extent on the quickness and skill of the leader. The group needs first to determine:

> Whether it is useful to discuss what appear to be the basic assumptions behind present policies, or some specific examples of the application of policy.
>
> If the former, what criteria should be used to judge the assumptions, and in what sequence should they be discussed?
>
> If the latter, what specific case can be accepted by the group as a typical one?

Conflict generally starts at the level of opinion with members of the group stating widely different points of view. The most common problem is that of starting with conclusions. One person may state that we should relax our trade barriers with the Soviet Union. Another may be convinced that such a course is unwise. If the reasons which support each opinion are not stated with the opinion, they must be asked for. If each person is forced to state his position fully (and given a chance to do so) the group can then assess how reasonable the positions are.

Two generally encountered blind alleys are arguing about facts and arguing about values. It is not very useful to argue about facts. Yet people spend a wearisome amount of time doing it. If people emerged from a subway station and began to argue about whether they were at 45th Street or 50th Street, we would consider them idots for not looking up to read the street sign. One can discuss the significance of a fact, or whether it makes any difference, or its possible meaning. But if the fact itself is in question, one can only agree on a way of finding out whether it is correct or not, or agree that its correctness cannot be determined.

Values are a different problem. Values are personal preferences. They range from minor tastes to beliefs in a certain concept of God, from a minor irritation with the man who doesn't open doors for a woman to a determination to destroy anyone who believes in a different

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Values are a different problem. Values are personal preferences. They range from minor tastes to beliefs in a certain concept of God, from a minor irritation with the man who doesn't open doors for a woman to a determination to destroy anyone who believes in a different kind of social order. An argument about whether our schools are doing a good job, for instance, might dissolve very quickly into conflicts of value about whether education ought to train peoples' minds, or prepare them for the useful and practical tasks of life.

Values present problems for group activity. There is a very little to be gained by arguing about preferences. Peoples' values can change in a group situation, but only when the group can agree on a standard to which it can apply pressure to conform. We catch most of our values when we are very young, and from people who are very important to us emotionally. While it is not very useful to argue about values, it is highly desirable to think through their consequences. If you like green apples, it is useful to know that stomach aches sometimes follow the eating of green apples.

It is important for other reasons that people know and understand the wide range of values which exist around them. It may not change their own beliefs, but in a complex civilization like ours it exerts a calming influence and often represents the difference between a naive and a sophisticated view of the world.

By his selection of a question for discussion and the sequence in which these questions are asked, the leader can predetermine the kind of discussion which will follow. He can by choice of question determine whether the discussion will deal with an examination of facts, with an interchange about values, or with a free-wheeling analysis of the opinions held by the group. By the sequence of questions he can also decide whether discussion will move from facts to values and then to opinions which grow out of these values; or whether, in reverse, discussion will start at the point of opinions and then push back to values and facts underlying those opinions.

Although it is true that by his selection and phrasing of questions the leader can do much to determine the direction of the discussion, he must also reckon with the desires of the group. He may well decide that he wants to move discussion from opinions back to values and facts but the group might decide that they first want to discuss facts. If they have been meeting together for some time they may well take the discussion away from the leader.

Consequently, the leader should discuss with the group his plan of action and his strategy of discussion. In many cases it is wise for the leader to point out that he plans to move from facts to opinions or vice versa, and to sound out the group on their agreement to the procedure. If, for good reason the group disagrees and wishes to reverse the procedure, it will be better to move with the group rather than have the leader and group work at cross-purposes. The following principles should be considered in phrasing questions:

> Before the discussion is started, decide what the strategy of the discussion should be. Should it concern itself primarily with opinions, with values or with facts? Should it move from one level to another, and in what direction?
>
> Having decided on the basic strategy for the discussion, select the questions to be included as well as the sequence of the questions.
>
> Test each question to make sure that it really does deal with only one level and that the participants know what kind of discussion is called for. Avoid questions which are fuzzy and which permit each member of the group to place his own interpretation on the kind of discussion to be raised.
>
> Make sure that the questions are not "loaded." There should be no pretermined answer built into them. Test the question to ensure that widely differing points of view (if it relates to opinions or values) are called for; and that, by the phrasing of the question judgments are not already made as to what values and opinions are acceptable.
>
> In questions which attempt to get at facts, be sure that the kinds of facts are made clear. Do not suggest the answer in the question, but do state very clearly in what area or areas answers are desired.

In selecting questions, the leader or any participant can move in two directions: either from facts and values to opinions; or from opinions back to the values and facts on which the opinions are based. If you start at opinions, however, there is very little that is truly educative if you don't help to move the group back to consideration of underlying facts and values (unless you are merely conducting a public opinion poll).

Demonstration Discussion:

This demonstration aims to reveal, as quickly and completely as possible, the roots of principle below the surface of opinion. Everyone has opinions and draws conclusions about the world. Many of the things he forms opinions about he has had little experience with. How does he form them then? Sometimes he takes another's word--the columnist, the radio newscaster, the weekly magazine, or Joe the bartender at the corner tavern.

Very often, man makes up his mind, consciously or not, by appeal to some principle which he has accepted long age. To take a very simple case: a prim librarian upbraiding a child at the circulation desk. The sympathy of the bystander will be with the child because at least two common principles vaguely recognized by most Americans have come into play--sympathy for the "underdog" and "fair play." Suppose the boy has just visciously hit a small girl over the head with a book? The bystander does not know, and usually he does not care to find out.

On a more complicated level, for example, of the good and bad in art or in public issues, the principle is less visible to the person who holds it. One who says, "I don't know anything about art, but I know what I like," generally has a principle lurking somewhere which he uses to judge what he likes. It may be something like "Good art reflects a recognizable and real world" or "Good art has a little sentiment to it"; but it is an artistic principle just the same.

It is a good indication that underlying principles are operating in a discussion when all sides seem to have an equally valid set of facts to back up their opinions. Members of the group can then hurl the facts at one another for a considerable period of time without getting down to the real root of the issue. This is precisely why the following discussion question provided for the demonstration is an unreal, or hypothetical one. There are no facts to dispute at all and therefore, if there are differing opinions on the question, the group will have to differ on the level of principles to which they appeal.

Whether or not people believe that right and wrong are valid concepts on a desert island depends on the principles from which they derive their values. Conflicting points of view, in order to be fully understood, must be analyzed in terms of the principles to which they appeal. For example, a person arguing that right and wrong are meaningless in isolation from society is appealing to the principle of social convention. An individual who maintains that right and wrong are valid concepts independent of time, place, and persons is appealing to absolute moral standards. People who express the same views, as well as those whose views conflict, may be appealing to different principles.

The group, for instance, may agree that right and wrong are only relative terms; some on the grounds that survival justifies what ordinarily might be considered wrong (principle of survival), others because they feel that right and wrong have different meanings to people depending on their particular orientation and experience (principle of individual differences). The purpose of this discussion is to demonstrate the relation between the points of view people express and the principles to which they are appealing. It is essential to keep pushing back from opinions or conclusions to principles. Once these are made clear, the basis for judgments can be understood and the bare bones of the argument analyzed.

If the above question about right and wrong seems irrelevant to the purposes of library group activity, the letters to the editor selection in almost any issue of American Libraries will yield many questions which are just as hypothetical. The following questions may be used for analysis of the discussion and the observer's report:

What were the principles involved in the different points of view on the question?

Did different principles always lead to different conclusions?

Is there any value in pushing back to principles when people express the same conclusion?

What conflicting principles were evident in the group? How were these differences handled by the leader and group? (Make sure that the discussion does not remain on the level of opinion but keeps pushing back to principles.)

OBSERVATION SHEET

1. During the practice discussion

_____did the leader attempt to clarify the major issue for discussion?

_____did the group share in the attempt to clarify the issue?

_____this function was not performed adequately by either.

2. To what extent did

_____the leader attempt to arrive at a definition of the terms used in the discussion?

_____the members assist in securing such definitions?

_____neither assist in this role?

3. Members understood one another

_____very well

_____fairly well

______very little

______not at all

4. Members drew out one another and asked questions to clarify the contributions of others

_____always

_____frequently

_____sometimes

______rarely

______never

5. Attempts were made to clarify ideas and thinking by probing for reasons behind opinions

_____always

_____frequently

_____sometimes

_____rarely

______never

______by members

______by leader

6. Attempts were made to examine the thinking which people used to justify their opinions

_____always

_____frequently

_____sometimes

_____rarely

______never

______by members

_____by leader

7. Evidence cited to support members' opinions was examined

_____always

_____frequently

_____sometimes

_____rarely

_____never

_____by members

_____by leader

8. Were the questions as used by the leader

______such that they clarified the area of discussion?

______such that the group was in doubt about the major issues for discussion?

9. As far as the sequence of questions is concerned

______did they push the discussion from opinions back to facts and values?

______did they move the discussion from facts and values on to opinions?

______was the direction of the discussion appropriate for the subject being discussed?

10. Most of the talking was done by

______group as a whole

______a few members

______the leader

Was there less general participation in this session than in previous ones?

If there was any change in the amount of participation to what do you attribute it? ____

TACTICS

WHAT Can Be Done to Make Discussions More LOGICAL and To Eliminate Fallacies of Reasoning?

Tactics or the process of reasoning has been studied for several thousands of years and a great deal of thinking about thinking has accumulated. This is not a treatise in logic, although the interested discussion leader will find the principles of logic helpful. Briefly described below are some of the more common errors which confuse encounter and debate and which the leader can learn through experience to avoid.

Leader has a difficult, but important responsibility for stimulating logical and intelligent reasoning. Leader must be aware of, and point out faulty reasoning such as those which occur in moving from facts to conclusions and from priciples to opinions.

Leader and group members must understand basic principles of logic as applied to discussion.

Leader must be able to illustrate the manner in which individual differences and varying backgrounds of group members bring about differing interpretations and conclusions from identical facts and data.

One of the reasons that proceedings in law are so complex is that the courts, out of a long and honorable tradition, insist on paying close attention to the nature of every piece of evidence which is admitted to consideration. Such care is mainly for the protection of the individual under charge. Opinions or ideas offered in a discussion should not be convicted or acquitted either, without a careful look at the evidence on which they are based. Watch for whether:

Facts offered justify the conclusion or are insufficient or irrelevant.

Use of an authority as evidence is justified by the qualifications of the authority. Is he in a position to know or interpret the facts by reason of background, knowledge, or experience? Does he have a special interest, concealed or open? Is his statement supported by evidence or based only on opinion?

Examples offered as evidence are valid in terms of their representativeness (one sample of almost anything is meaningless), and their relation to the issue under discussion.

Most conclusions and opinions are based on underlying premises, which are often imperfectly stated and can easily lead to confusion. For example, a person who is opposed to the giving of foreign aid by the United States may well deflect discussion off onto the question whether inflation lowers the standard of living. It is remarkable how often a group will permit itself to be diverted onto such a tangent. What it really ought to be looking at is the question of whether foreign aid will cause inflation, which was the original person's unvoiced premise. Watch out for:

Giving of an opinion without reasons to support it. There is otherwise no basis for forming a judgment.

Ready and unaminous agreement on a controversial issue. It is easy to agree on conclusions for significantly different reasons.

Logic is not concerned with the truth of statements; it is concerned with whether they relate consistently to one another. Many people would be surprised if they know how often they used the often they use the syllogism. The critic of a political appointee who says that: "Smith, like all Communists, believes in desegregation. Therefore, he is a Communists," is using a syllogism, although a faulty one:

All Communists believe in desegregation.
Smith believes in desegregation.
Therefore Smith is a Communist.

In the syllogism there is always a major premise or general proposition, a minor premise or particular case, and a conclusion or inference drawn from the relationship between these two. What would make this correct as a syllogism? If the major premise were to be changed to "Only Communists believe in desegregation," the conclusion would logically follow. However, that it is only logically true. Its truth depends on an ability to prove both the minor and the major premise.

Logic always says, IF such-and-such is true, THEN something or other follows. It works the other way around, too. Instead of starting with a general proposition, as above, one can start with particular cases and try to generalize from them in an attempt to establish a general law. This process, called induction, is subject to many errors although it has proved a valuable way of proceeding for both the physical and social sciences. It is also the process which people misuse when they say things like: "A Jew shoved me in the bus today. Aren't they the most awful people!"

Conclusions may be "valid" because they correctly follow from a general proposition. But they might not be correct if the general proposition itself is false.

Generalizations may be based on questionable or incomplete data.

Whenever you use a familiar image or experience to explain another more difficult idea, you make the assumption that the two things are alike enough to enable you to transfer meaning from one to the other. For example, Carlyle's argument against representative government points out that government is bound to fail because a ship could never be taken around Cape Horn if the captain were obliged to consult the crew every time before changing course.

Even if the generalization is true (that the sharing of power involves a lack of efficiency), the obvious difference between a ship and a government are so great that caution is necessary. It would be simpler to make the argument without using the analogy. One can make a case for denying the use of analogy in discussion. Analogies can mislead but they can also be a powerful stimulant to imaginative thought. Perhaps it is enough to consider the following cautions in the use of analogy as to whether:

The two circumstances compared are really similar.

The analogy disregards fundamental differences and stresses only superficial points of similarity.

A general rule is based on an analogy from a single example.

Someone has pointed out that there is a close statistical relationship between the salaries of Presbyterian ministers in Massachusetts and the price of rum in Havana. Does the one cause the other? Lots of things vary in the same direction and at the same time, but there need not be any causal relationship between them. The leader needs to be tough about this element of the discussion by raising a question, whenever a group member does not, about any blandy stated causal connection as to whether:

The asserted causal connection can be really demonstrated.

The cause is sufficient to produce the effect. The export of potatoes from Maine can actually have very little to do with the frequency of H-bomb tests.

There are other factors operating which might be a more important cause than the asserted one.

To help group deliberation, the leader at various times may have to make sure that people distinguish between fact and opinion in the arguments advanced, as well as the following cautions:

> Opinions are neither accepted nor dismissed without careful consideration of the reliability of the evidence, and the logic or illogic of the reasoning.
>
> People should state all the premises from which they are arguing.
>
> Analogies are used and weighed with caution.
>
> Cause and effect relationships stated or implied are examined critically.
>
> The group continues to push back to causes.
>
> Each point of agreement and disagreement is noted and clarified as the discussion moves along.

Demonstration Discussion:

This is an exercise in the difficulty of reaching group agreement on conclusions even when the group starts out with the same data. It is also an exercise in making a conscious effort to limit conclusions to the data given. This is not a test of inferential reasoning ability. It is an opportunity to examine reasoning processes operating in the group. It is essential to stress the need for giving reasons so that reasoning can be examined.

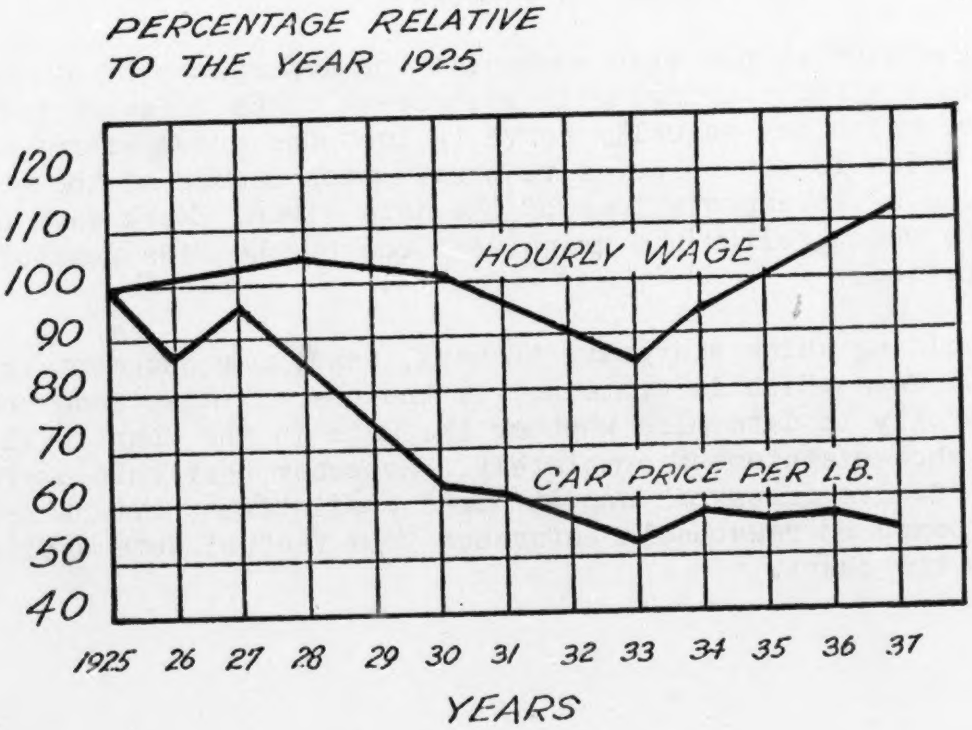
Let us suppose that the IF statement involved in a process of reasoning is only a guess, or an assumption. For example, "The public library is probably preparing to take over all information sources in the community. IF this is true, THEN the community agencies should take the following steps..." In this case you are in double trouble. You must be careful that the conclusions you come to in the final part of the sentence are consistent with your assumption. The **truth** of the entire statement depends on your ability to prove the original assumption, the IF part of the proposition.

However great the difficulty, reasoning very often must proceed from assumptions which are not subject to immediate investigation or proof. The reasoning process is somewhat clearer, though, if the basis for the reasoning is an indisputable fact. The question of how valid the original assumption is does not then arise. That is why the material for the following demonstration discussion can be drawn from an easily verified source. The group, without argument can accept the graph given as true. It can squarely face any difference in the conclusions drawn from the graph as due to differences in the way members of the group are reasoning.

The exercise should also emphasize the importance of sticking to precise data without bringing in what seems to be relevant personal experience which may actually serve to lead the group astray. The material below is set up so as to permit each member of the group to do a series of interpretations of the data given. Mark each of the statements which follow the graph with one of the five possible judgments provided.

In deciding which statement to mark, base your judgment only on the actual data which is contained in the chart. Also read the statement carefully to determine whether the data in the chart will support the chosen statement completely. Remember that this exercise does not involve guesswork nor informed predictions, but rather a decision based on reasonable inference from factual data available to you in the chart.

The graph below gives some data about hourly wages in the automotive industry and the average cost of automobiles per pound. Some additional information is given below the graph.



Hourly Wages are given for the years after 1925 as percent of the hourly wage of 1925.

The price per pound of cars is given for the years after 1925 as percents of the price per pound in 1925.

Instructions for Marking the Statements are given below. The data given in this graph are :

- T - sufficient to make the statement true.
- PT - sufficient to indicate that the statement is probably true.
- I - not sufficient to indicate whether there is any degree of truth or falsity in the statement.
- PF - sufficient to indicate that the statement is probably false.
- F - sufficient to make the statement false.

Statements:

1. From 1934 to 1937 hourly wages increased while car prices per pound remained about the same.
2. In the airplane industry the relation of hourly wages and the price per pound of the finished products has been similar to that of the automobile industry.
3. Hourly wages will be higher in 1940 than in 1933.
4. The automobile industry made less profit in 1937 than in 1925.
5. Hourly wages were higher in 1924 than in 1937.
6. Hourly wages decreased each year from 1925 to 1933.
7. The total earnings per worker for the year 1937 were higher than for the year 1925.
8. The automobile manufacturers raised hourly wages in order to enable their employees to buy more goods.
9. During the period shown on the chart car prices per pound and hourly wages reached their lowest point in the same year.
10. The average selling price of cars was higher in 1925 than in 1937.

Some general problems of drawing conclusions from given facts and assessing the reliability of the evidence on which conclusions are based, form the material for this session. The important concepts to be communicated are the need to examine the soundness of the reasoning which involves finding out why people think as they do, and the need to question the reliability of the facts or information cited in support of an opinion in order to determine how valid the opinion or conclusion is.

The material for this discussion has provided an opportunity for the group to practice the skill of reasoning within a fairly limited frame-work so that the steps can be easily seen. The following questions may be used for analysis and discussion:

Report how you marked each of the items listed under "Statements". In any case where members of the group marked an item differently, discuss the reasoning process whereby the judgments were made.

How much agreement was there among the group?

What kinds of reasoning problems seemed to account for differences of opinion?

Did the group experience any difficulty in sticking to the data in making judgments? If so, why?

OBSERVATION SHEET

1. During the practice discussion did any of the following situations occur?

______Controversial issues were readily agreed to without any testing of the basis for concensus.

______Opinions were frequently given without any testing of the reasons to support the opinions.

______Were any conclusions arrived at by the group unjustified in terms of the facts and data presented?

______Were examples and authorities which were cited to provide evidence for arugments or points of view valid and reliable?

2. In situations such as those stated above

______Did the leader make any conscious attempts to overcome or test the fallacies in reasoning?

______To what extent was he successful?

______How might he have been more effective?

______Did group members help to eliminate instances of false reasoning?

3. Were there any instances during the discussion where

______Analogies were used effectively?

______Analogies were used fallaciously?

______Causal relationships were used correctly?

______Causal relationships were used fallaciously?

4. To what extent did the group concentrate its efforts on the assigned discussion task?

______Were at work most of the time

______Worked, but some time spent in talking about other things

______Spent a good deal of time on other things

5. Most of the talking was done by

______Group as a whole

______A few members

______The leader

6. Members participated in ways which helped make the discussion productive

______by encouraging other members to contribute

______by calling attention to points of agreement or disagreement

______by summarizing

______by attempting to clarify

______by introducing new points for consideration

______by bringing the group back to the subject

______by trying to resolve conflicts

7. Members paid attention to what others were saying

______always

______frequently

______sometimes

______rarely

______never

8. Members understood one another

______very well

______fairly well

______very little

______not at all

9. Members drew out one another and asked questions to clarify contributions of others

______always

______frequently

______sometimes

______rarely

______never

10. Attempts were made to clarify ideas and thinking by probing for reasons behind opinions

______always

______frequently

______sometimes

______rarely

______never

______by members

______by leader

11. Attempts were made to examine the thinking which people used to justify their opinions

______always

______frequently

______sometimes

______rarely

______never

______by members

______by leader

SECTION THREE

Evaluation as the "final" component of the group process is essential to improve participants understanding of group dynamics, the factors which contribute to effective participation, and communication as well as creative and critical thinking. Evaluation as a term has been widely used and often rather loosely. This is understandable since there are a number of different kinds of evaluation which can be used for different purposes.

The general purpose of librarian sponsored group activity is communicative. Communication is a process whereby desired changes are induced in the behavior of individuals and participants in groups. Changes in behavior include changes in thinking, feeling and acting. In group activity the objectives and goals relate to desired behavioral changes in the individuals who participate. These goals include the participatory skills of the social game, the ability to read, look and listen, and an understanding of creative and critical thinking as applied to the social function of each participant.

PLANNING AND EVALUATION

WHAT can be Done to PLAN Local Programs and to IMPROVE the Program?

The proof of program development, training and evaluation can be made only in terms of what librarians actually do when they organize and operate group programs. Realistic evaluation will be in terms of how they go about organizing and setting up a program, how they select materials and questions within the program, how they create a climate which permits participation and discussion and how they are able to move discussion toward more effective communication reasoning.

The purpose of this "last" evaluation is to help the librarian build a bridge from a training or "theoretical" situation to the very practical and realistic one which confronts any librarian actually ready to start setting up a mini-institute. It is up to each librarian to consider the situation in his community, the groups that he can work with, the materials which are available, and then to decide what materials he wants to bring together with what ways.

There are no formulae to use in this process. No one person has an answer which will serve equally well for all leaders and for all communities. There are, however, certain steps which must be gone through before you can get a program under way. Up to now we have been talking about what to do and how to do it once the program begins. Now we must turn our attention to the preliminaries: how to gather a group and prepare them for the first meeting. This is neither a demonstration nor a practice discussion. This is a discussion for the purpose of planning and making decisions and for comparing notes about plans and decisions.

To facilitate this discussion, a series of questions are presented which parallel the required steps in organizing a program. Each librarian is asked to review these questions and to answer them in terms of hiw own situation and plans for the future. After each librarian has recorded his own answers they will be discussed by the entire group so that everyone has a better picture of where we go from here. The following questions may be useful for analysis and planning:

> What are the first steps you would take in setting up a group for the program?
>
> Do you know of any groups that are already organized who might be interested? Who are they?

If you do not know of already organized groups, where would you start to recruit members for a group?

In trying to set up a program, either through an already existing group or through contacts with individuals, what would you emphasize primarily in terms of stimulating interest in the program?

What do you think about the various general methods which have been suggested for recruiting participants, e.g. lay control, the coffee house facility, the street librarian?

Where do you think you will plan to hold your program: private home, library, or elsewhere? Why?

What aids will you want in getting your program organized and under way? (materials, consultant, brochures, lists, etc.)

To arrive at a definition of evaluation, it is necessary to relate evaluation to the purposes of group activity in the library as well as in relation to community development. Nor is it possible to ignore the work of the librarian to the individual. Actually, it is necessary to take a systems analysis approach to the public services of libraries.

In order to increase the sensitivity of the leader and group members to the degree to which program goals are being accomplished, the leader must use a variety of devices to evaluate the program during its progress. It is important to understand the use of observation by group members, reaction sheets, observation sheets and the more informal evaluative and feedback techniques as a continuing means of keeping the program on track and achieving its major goals. The elements of mature group encounter include:

Emotional climate--create a natural, informal atmosphere.

Physical setting--all group members should be able to see and hear each other.

Individuality--each person does his own thinking.

Careful listening--so as to understand the other person's point of view.

Shared participation--everyone has a chance to participate.

Reading, viewing, listening--preparation on the topic by all members of the group.

Understanding--good communication among all members.

Friendly disagreement--group members explain proposals, rather than argue.

Learning--emphasis is on effective individual and corporate understanding.

Accomplishment--the main phases of the problem are covered and the discussion results in a sense of accomplishment.

The leader must involve the group in the final evaluation. It is necessary to know the degree to which a program has accomplished its specific objectives so that he can improve the next program in which he participates. The public services of libraries occur in contexts, i.e. situations which have been produced so that communication can take place. The following points may serve for the evaluation of the librarians performance in the group context:

Was the group leader's introduction brief, impartial and interesting?

Was the group leader's opening question designed to locate the interest of the group in the topic for discussion?

Did the leader follow-up and develop the interest of the group in the topic for discussion?

Was participation well distributed?

Were various sides of the question brought out?

Were the leader's questions stated impartially?

Did the discussion stay on the subject?

Was anyone permitted to dominate the discussion?

Did the encounter extend the present interest of the group in the topic or problem for discussion?

Was the group talking and working together in exploring the problem?

Depth of encounter: was there adequate development of the topic in relation to the amount of time available?

Communication is a process whereby certain desired changes are brought about in the behavior of individuals or groups. Changes in behavior include changes in thinking, feeling and acting. In all of these programs there are certain goals and objectives which relate to desired behavioral changes in persons who participate. Sound program evaluation is a process which attempts to determine the extent to which these stated changes in behavior have in fact been brought about during the process of the program.

No attempt will be made to develop an elaborate outline of techniques for a complicated and involved process of evaluating each of the programs that you will ever run. The proposed essential steps are simple ones that any good leader can apply in his own group and that will be effective in helping him to improve his performance in running subsequent programs. The following points may provide a general outline:

A clear cut statement of program goals and objectives is the responsibility of the leader to emphasize and discuss with the participants in the beginning, so that there is common agreement on the kinds of behavioral changes (not necessarily defined in those terms) which the program is aiming at. It is important that participants, as well as the leader, be aware of these desired goals.

Some device or techniques should be used to determine whether the goals have been achieved. Such a device may consist of a questionnaire or form which is worked out to test the extent to which the objectives have been achieved: an objective multiple choice test, an essay or a free-response questionnaire. Or it might consist of small group discussion, during the last session, of the extent to which different program objectives have been achieved. Observers can help in keeping an eye on the discussion and attempting to interpret which of the objectives have been effectively achieved.

Analyze the results of evaluation and use them in improving the next program. After reviewing and discussing the evaluation with the participants, much help can be secured from them in suggesting how the goals might be better achieved next time. Participants are in the best position to suggest what material has been most helpful, what techniques were most productive, and what kinds of discussions helped to achieve the goals. Based on the analysis by the group, reactions from observers and the experience as well as insights gained by the evaluation of the leader, it should then be possible to plan for improving the program.

A frequent reaction to the subject of evaluation is that it is too complicated, too pedantic, and too theoretical. Many people say, "We know how good the program is by the reactions of the participants," "We can tell how the course is going by the number of people who show up," or "Any good leader can tell whether the program is successful or not." All of these statements are certainly true in part. At the same time it is pretty hard to tell merely by intuition what the participants have got out of the program or how it can be improved.

Demonstration and Analysis:

During this session, the trainer has the responsibility to see that members of the group have some understanding of the term as well as the purpose and the essential elements of evaluation. Once he is convinced that the group understands that evaluation is a method for determining behavioral changes rather than merely the filling in of a questionnaire, he can move on to the evaluation of this program. The procedure for evaluating this program serves a multi-purpose function: that of helping group members review the major concepts and ideas that they have gathered during the program; permitting group members to take part in a demonstration of a method that they, themselves, can use in evaluating the programs led by them; securing valuable data which can be used in improving this particular program.

The total group should be divided up into four subgroups and each subgroup is assigned one of the for evaluation outlines. The leader tells them that they will report back to the entire group on findings of each subgroup. Each subgroup reviews the evaluation outline assigned to it and discusses questions contained in it. The subgroups attempt to reach consensus on questions. However, where there is no agreement, the area of disagreement should be reported.

EVALUATION OUTLINE

Group One

Objective to be Analyzed: Extent to which the program has been effective in "Increasing sensitivity to the major factors involved in a discussion program."

Based on the discussion in this training program, what are are the major factors which must be present in any effective discussion program?

What new or different insights did you get from this training program with respect to the major factors in any discussion program?

In what ways do you feel that this objective might have been better achieved?

With respect to this particular objective, what parts of the program do you feel were:

Most helpful?

Least helpful?

As far as the entire program is concerned:

What did you feel was most stimulating to you and what was most helpful practically?

What portions of the program were least helpful and might well be eliminated from this program in the future?

EVALUATION OUTLINE

Group Two

Objective to be Analyzed: Extent to which program has been effective in "Increasing understanding of the importance and value of group discussion".

Based on discussion and readings in this program, summarize briefly what your group feels are the major values of group discussion and why you feel it is important.

What new or different insights, knowledge or understanding did you get from this program with respect to this objective?

In what ways do you think this objective might have been better achieved?

With respect to this objective, what parts of the program do you feel were:

Most helpful?

Least helpful?

As far as the entire program is concerned:

What did you feel was most stimulating to yoi, and what was most helpful practically?

What portions of theprogram were least helpful and might be eliminated in the future?

EVALUATION OUTLINE

Group Three

Objective to be Analyzed: Extent to which program has "Increased skill in diagnosing problems which a leader must handle".

Based on discussions in this program, what do you feel are the major problems which you, as a leader, will have to cope with in your groups? In what ways can you become sensitive to, and aware of, these problems?

What new or different insights or understandings about problems in working with groups did you get as a result of this program?

With respect to this objective, what parts of the program did you feel were:

Most helpful?

Least helpful?

As far as the entire program is concerned:

What did you feel was most stimulating to you, and what was most helpful practically?

What protions of the program were least helpful and might be eliminated from this program in the future?

EVALUATION OUTLINE

Group Four

Objective to be Analyzed: Extent to which program provided "Experience in leading discussion in order to build leadership skills".

Do you feel that the actual practice sessions in discussion leadership were aided and enriched in any way by the theoretical material presented and by the demonstration discussions? If not, explain why these theoretical presentations did not help.

In what specific ways, if any, were your skills improved through the experience of leading a practice discussion? Was the actual experience itself most helpful, or the observation and analysis which followed the practice discussion?

In what way do you think this objective might have been better achieved?

With respect to this objective, what parts of the program do you feel were:

Most helpful?

Least helpful?

As far as the entire program is concerned:

What did you feel was most stimulating to you, and what was most helpful practically?

What portions of the program were least helpful and might be eliminated from this program in the future?

OBSERVING GROUPS AT WORK

1. How far did the group progress toward its goal for this meeting?

____

None   A little   Halfway   Much   All the way

Comment ________________________________

2. To what extent did the members understand whay they were trying to do?

____

Nobody   A few   Half did   Most   All did

Comment ________________________________

3. How well did they understand how they were trying to do this?

____

Nobody   A few   Half did   Most   All did

Comment ________________________________

4. To what extent was the group stymied by lack of knowledge?

____

Badly   Half the time   Not much

Comment ________________________________

5. To what extent did the members seem to be interested in what the group was trying to do?

____

Nobody   A few   Half were   Most   All were

Comment ________________________________

6. Would you say that interest lagged or held up?

____

Lagged badly   Help up pretty well   Held up all the time

Comment ________________________________

7. To what extent were members able to subordinate individual interests to common goal?

____

Seldom   Half the time   All the time

Comment ________________________________

8. Would you say that the general atmosphere of the group was:

____

Hostile Half & Half Friendly

____

Formal Half & Half Informal

____

Competitive Half & Half Cooperative

Comment ____________________________________

9. How many of the members participated in the discussion?

____

A few Less than half Half Most All

Comment ____________________________________

10. How often were the members' contributions off the beam?

____

Most of the time Half the time Seldom

Comment ____________________________________

11. Did contributors indicate carefully listening to what others were saying?

____

A few did Half did Most did

Comment ____________________________________

12. Did contributors seem to be tied to preconceived positions, or did they consider matters under discussion with an open mind?

____

Most were preconceived Half & Half Most open-minded

Comment ____________________________________

13. How well did those in special roles serve the group?

Leader ____________________________________

Poorly Fairly well Very well

Observer ____________________________________

Poorly Fairly well Very well

Comment ____________________________________

____

GROUP SELF-EVALUATION

1. Do members and leader prepare well for the discussion, by:
   ( ) reading the entire selection at least once?
   ( ) selecting main points in the reading for discussion?
   ( ) looking for a hierarchy of problems in the reading (i.e. those points which focus on the author's main objective)?
   ( ) gathering examples from the text to support the choice of main issues?

2. Does the group concentrate its efforts and focus on the main problems or issues in the readings:
   ( ) working together most of the time?
   ( ) worked, but some time was spent on other things?
   ( ) a good deal of time was spent on other things?

3. If the group does not work well together, what are the reasons?
   ( ) deadlocking over irrelevancies, whether personal or otherwise?
   ( ) being too sociable, joking, etc.?
   ( ) some members were frustrated?

4. Who did most of the talking:
   ( ) the group as a whole?
   ( ) a few members?
   ( ) the leader?

5. Are differing points of view:
   ( ) acknowledged and considered impartially?
   ( ) acknowledged, but not considered objectively?
   ( ) neither acknowledged or considered?

6. Are morale problems discussed, such as lack of interest, conflicts and anxieties:
   ( ) never openly face those problems?
   ( ) leader helps the group to face and resolve such problems?
   ( ) members raise and try to resolve these problems?

7. Do members participate in ways which help to make the discussion productive, by:
   ( ) encouraging other members to contribute and cutting down personal comments in order to give them time?
   ( ) introducing new points for consideration?
   ( ) calling attention to points of agreement ordisagreement?
   ( ) bringing the group back to the subject and summarizing?
   ( ) trying to resolve conflicts and clarify points of view by drawing person out?
   ( ) examining the thinking which others use to justify their opinions (i.e. probing for reasons behind opinions)?
   ( ) citing evidence in the reading to support every opinion?

8. Does the group freely communicate its feelings and expectations about his performance to the leader?
   ( ) have never brought this up?
   ( ) leaders encourage the members to discuss their leading performance?
   ( ) members take responsibility for expressing themselves about the leadership performance?

SELF-EVALUATION

Category A

	Sessions				
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
I made preparation	5	5	5	5	5
by reading the material for	4	4	4	4	4
the session; bringing any	3	3	3	3	3
necessary materials to	2	2	2	2	2
session properaly organized	1	1	1	1	1

Add all circled numbers:
Total:__________

Category B

I was attentive	5	5	5	5	5
to the leader; to my	4	4	4	4	4
fellow group members or	3	3	3	3	3
consultants.	2	2	2	2	2
	1	1	1	1	1

Add all circled numbers:
Total:__________

Category C

I co-operated	5	5	5	5	5
by getting to sessions on	4	4	4	4	4
time; following directions;	3	3	3	3	3
keeping my remarks on the	2	2	2	2	2
subject; taking notes or	1	1	1	1	1
reporting if I were asked.					

Add all circled numbers:
Total:__________

Category D

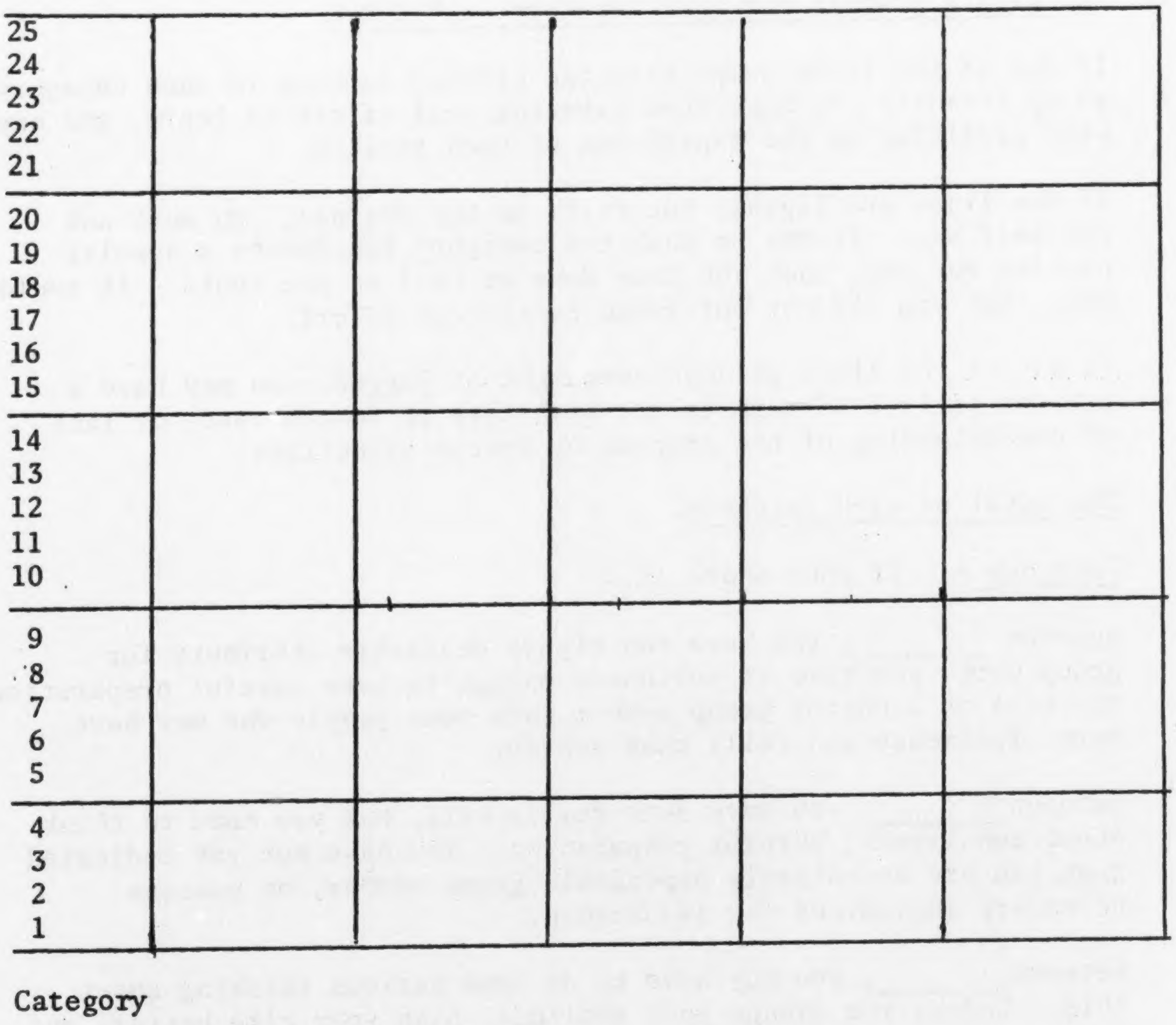
I contributed to the discussion	5	5	5	5	5
by making relevant remarks, one	4	4	4	4	4
point at a time; speaking	3	3	3	3	3
briefly; making myself clear;	2	2	2	2	2
using brief and pertinent	1	1	1	1	1
examples.					

Add all circled numbers:
Total:____________

Category E	Sessions				
I involved myself in the group by developing a concern for the objectives of the group, and the problems of others, even if it meant restraining my personal concerns; by encouraging others to speak, and cutting down my own comments to give them time; by helping others to clarify their points; by helping others to stay on the subject.	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1	5 4 3 2 1

Add all circled numbers:
Total: ________

Place a dot representing the total number for each category on the chart below, and connect the dots with a line.



On the previous pages is a list of 5 categories. Grade yourself in each category for each session on a scale of 5.

1	2	3	4	5
poorly on the whole	well enough in some respects	well enough in some respects	well in most respects	well in all respects

INVENTORY OF PERFORMANCE

What Your Score Means (in three parts)

I. The growth profile for each category, A B C D E

If any of the lines connecting the circled numbers in each category go up steadily you have been exerting real effort to learn, and have been profiting by the experience of each session.

If the lines are jagged, but still on the upgrade, you must ask yourself why. It may be that one category represents a special problem for you, that you have done as well as you could. It could mean that you did not put forth consistent effort.

If any of the lines go down--straight or jagged--you may have a problem of lack of commitment, inability to concentrate, or lack of understanding of the program or course objectives.

II. The total of each category.

Category A If your score is:

between ________, you have one highly desirable attribute for group work--you take it seriously enough to make careful preparation. You will be a better group member than some people who may have more experience and skill than you do.

between________, you have done fairly well, but you need to think about consistent, careful preparation. You have not yet indicated that you are an entirely dependable group member, or possess necessary ingredient for leadership.

between________, you may have to do some serious thinking about this. Unless you change your attitude, plan your time better, and take greater responsibility for preparation, you will never be the asset to a group that you can be.

Category B If your score is:

between________, you will probably learn whatever you set out to learn. You will be a welcome addition to a group. Your attention will encourage others, and will save them the time and trouble of having to recall you to the business at hand. You will be the one in the group most likely to understand what is going on, and, probably, among the most interested.

between_______, you are about average, and can expect to get average results from group participation. You are close enough to a superior rating to make it worth your while to concentrate on the kind of attentiveness that pays real dividends.

between_______, have you considered what some of the causes of inattention are? Perhaps you need a physical checkup, or more sleep. If the reasons for your mind's wandering are not physical, perhaps you have not schooled yourself to shut out distractions, or to focus on one stimulus at a time.

Category C If your score is:

between_______, you are performing as a satisfactory group member. Co-operation alone will not make you one, but, without it, nothing else will.

between_______, you have failed in an essential that is that result of willingness, not skill. Think carefully about what would happen to any group if most of the members were careless in this category.

Category D If your score is:

between_______, probably you have some natural skill and some experience. You are a highly desirable group member, with the capacity to become an expert in group work.

between _______, you have done well. If group work is not part of your everyday experience, you have done very well indeed. You are conscious of the fact that you are working as a group member, not entirely as an individual. You have brought your intelligence, self-control, and command of the language to the job.

between _______, your performance is about average for a person who does not participate in group discussion too often, and has not given it a great deal of thought. You have a good basic for development.

between _______, ask yourself--is my reticence owing to shyness, excitability, or reserve? Is it cloudy thinking? Is it related to inattention or to lack of involvement in the group? Review the good contributions you have made. What prompted them? Why were they good?

Category E If your score is:

between ________, you probably have high scores in all categories. You have the essential attitude for group work, and the potentiality for real leadership.

between ________, you are a desirable group member, and have no doubt profited by this meeting in direct ratio to your success in this category. Your awareness of the group is a good basis for further study and practice in group work.

between ________, you are just beginning to get the point of working in groups. You need to ask yourself--why are we doing this as a group? What is my responsibility here?

between ________, perhaps you have not cultivated the art of looking outside yourself, nor identifying yourself with other people's needs and interests. There is a certain justice in the fact that (by concentrating on your own interests) you have probably not learned as much from this experience as you might have.

III. The over-all profile.

If the line is fairly straight, you need only note your level of performance and work toward a higher one.

If the line is markedly irregular, try to see relationships among the highs, and among the lows, in order to select a plan for improvement.

E.g., highs in A,B,C, and lows in the other categories may indicate good attitudes but undeveloped skills.

E.g., highs in D and E and lows in the other categories may indicate a certain skill unaccompanied by real commitment.

E.G., highs in all but E may indicate commitment and a certain skill, but not enough knowledge of the group process or practice in it as yet.

SECTION FOUR

Appendix

No attempt has been made in this guide to present the subject content of group encounter. Content ranges all over the deweyized collection and can be easily retrieved by any competent librarian to meet any particular group's interests.

Library science or library economy as it is sometimes called is largely preoccupied with the infrastructure of communication rather than with communication itself. Since library literature has ignored human communication, the following publications are listed in the event that some few librarians may wish to become involved with the communicative encounter.

Communications Management of Human Resources	243 p.	$3.00
Communication for Librarians	185 p.	$2.50
Advisory Counseling for Librarians	179 p.	$2.00
Interviewing for Counselor and Reference Librarians	137 p.	$2.00
Floating Librarians in the Community	261 p.	$2.50
Media Designed Programs for Librarians	54 p.	$1.50

("Discourse Units in Human Communication for Librarians")

These publications may be obtained from the Bookstore, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213.

SOME BASIC DISCUSSION PROBLEMS

The Monopolist:

The leader might say

"While we are on this point, let's hear from some of the other members."

"You have raised some interesting points Mr. ______. Would anyone else like to comment?"

"Are there others who would like to comment on this point?"

Ask the monopolist to summarize what he has said, so that he will draw his point to a close. Or, ask some other group member to re-phrase the points.

The Silent Members:

Many silent members attend discussion meetings regularly. They enjoy the discussions, follow the trend of the discussion closely, do the reading and therefore benefit tremendously. However, discussion leaders should encourage the quiet person to talk, and look for opportunities for him to participate. But never put a silent member on the spot by asking him a direct question unless you know he is ready to speak. When the silent person indicates a desire to talk but does not have a chance to get into the discussion, you might say:

"John, isn't this in line with your work? Based on your experience, what do you think about the...?"

Get to know the silent members of the group. Engage in a friendly conversation with them before the session begins. If the silent member has difficulty in expressing himself, help him to clarify his statement:

"I wonder if what you are saying ties in with our subject someting like this..."

Off the Track:

The leader might say

"Your point is an interesting one. However, perhaps we shouls get back to the subject." Then, as leader, restate your original question.

"Could you save your point until later?"

"How does your point relate to the subject? Will you explain further?"

Too Much Agreement Within the Group:

"Is there another side to this question?"

"Let's look at the other side of the coin. Has anyone thought about this phase of the problem...?"

The Discussion Bogs Down:

If you are somewhere near a halfway point, ask the group members if they would like to take a short recess. This will give you time to collect your thoughts about the subject and to think of a few questions on a different aspect of the topic.

Leader's Job

Open discussion - set the stage with a brief introduction

(a) Help group - discover issues.
(b) Focus discussion - don't direct
(c) Ask the natural question - play by ear
(d) Know when to step in - have sense of timing
(e) Be impartial - respect opinions of all members
(f) Don't force participation
(g) Create a friendly and accepting atmosphere
(h) Be patient and provide balance
(i) Keep group on track
(j) Be flexible - shape questions out of the discussion itself.
(k) Examine area of disagreement

ART OF LISTENING ATTENTIVELY

When you lead a discussion

Respect the opinions of all participants; do not evaluate or criticize comments.

Ask questions. Do not answer questions - redirect them to the group.

Allow people time to think. Ask a question and wait. Do not rephrase, or add to the question. Look interested, and someone will answer when he has had time to frame an answer.

Allow the group time to answer one another. Do not make a comment or ask another question every time someone speaks.

Keep the group on the subject. If the discussion wonders, remind the group of the question or topic. If you are working with an on-the-spot reading, refer to this material frequently.

Watch the group closely and constantly to see who is ready to comment.

Help people to say what they mean - restate a comment if necessary and ask, "Have I understood you correctly?", or ask a question for clarification.

Nail down what has been said - summarize before going on to another phase of the topic.

MAINTAIN GOOD COMMUNICATION

Communication about issues lies at the heart of good discussion. In leading the discussion try to help all the members of the group realize their fullest potentiality; try to draw out the best from each participant. Encourage clear expression of ideas and logical thinking. Clarify "fuzzy" language, abstractions, and faulty reasoning without putting the participant on the spot. Avoid the "define your terms" and "justify your position" statement. Remember that discussion is a method of working and talking together so as to achieve understanding; it is not an exercise in logic or semantics.

One of the main functions of the discussion leader is to maintain good communication: to clarify statements, to be sure everyone understands what is being said. Consequently, beware of --

"Fuzzy Language"

Mr. Jones: "I believe in free speech"
Leader: "Could you give us an example of your point?"

Abstract Terms

(Such words as - freedom, democracy, justice, conservative, true, etc.)

"In what way are you using the word, freedom? I wonder if you might give us an example of what you mean?"

Indefinite References

"They say that.."
"As we all know.."
"Business leaders know..."
"All intelligent people know..."

The leader might ask: "Who or what group are you referring to? Who are They?"

"Snarl" Words

(Such words as - war monger, reactionary demagogue, welfare state, bureaucrat)

The leader might ask: "I am not sure I understand what you mean, will you clarify it for us?"

ASKING QUESTIONS

Purpose of Asking Questions

1. To stimulate discussion.
2. To Point up and focus on issues.
3. To clarify contributions.
4. To promote progression, transition, and balance in discussion.

Method of Asking Questions

1. Address your questions to the group as a whole, not to any one individual. Toss it out to the group and then try to develop and follow-up the interests of 1the group. Don't be bound by a list of questions. Know the topic and its subdivisions well enough to develop the discussion into whatever area of the topic the group may wish to discuss.

2. Ask the right question at the right time. Develop a sense of timing: know when to step in and ask a question, and when to listen. Remember that discussion is not just a series of questions and answers. It is a method of sharing and exchanging ideas.
3. Don't be afraid of silence. After you have tossed a question out to the group, give the participants time to collect their thoughts. Wait thirty seconds - the gears are grinding!
4. Shape questions out of the discussion itself; the natural question is the one that evolves from a previous contribution.

Characteristics of Good Questions

1. Questions should be brief, impartial, and clearly phased.

   Examples: Have government regulations stifled private enterprise?
   Is freedom of thought dangerous?
   Are pressure groups essential in a democratic society?
   What has led to the present conflict?

2. Phrasing - Questions should be stated in an impartial and open-ended way; the first few words of your question are important.

   To what extent is government responsible for...?

   How many, if any, of these principles are....?

   So you agree or disagree that our foreign policy....?

   What, in your opinion, is the most reasonable method of.....?

3. Types of questions:

   Exploratory questions - opening questions designed to locate the general interest of a group in a topic.
   Clarifying questions - questions designed to clarify contributions.
   Data questions - questions designed to bring out needed information.
   Progression questions - questions designed to help the group move forward.

Questions which are Barriers to Good Discussion

1. Long, involved questions.
2. Direct questions which tend to create a teacher-pupil atmosphere.
3. Questions which can be answered with a yes or no answer.
4. Factual questions - (Don't let the discussion bog down. Have someone look up the facts while the group goes on with the discussion.)
5. Loaded questions which express the bias of the leader:

"Don't you agree..."	"As we all know...."	"Shouldn't we..."
"Don't you believe..."	"Ought we..."	"In my opinion..."

6. Indefinite questions:
   "Do you think the next Congress will be as bad as the present one?"

PHRASING AND USE OF QUESTIONS TO STIMULATE DISCUSSION

The Issue

Make sure that you have a clear understanding of the issue. (themes, definitions, issues). This is of first importance if you are to make it meaningful to others.

Think about the issue in terms of -- Who? Why? When? Where? and How?

Decide which type of question best fits the issue -- open-ended opinion question, exploratory question designed to locate the interest of the group in the issue, question designed to bring out needed information.

The Open Ended Opinion Question (This type of question leaves the participants free to offer any idea or opinion on the issue they may think of. They are not asked to make their comments conform to one of several ideas which are already outlined for them. Their comments are free and open; the open-ended question sets no definite alternatives.) What is your opinion about war?

Keep it within reasonable boundaries. An open-ended question can be too broad and leave the participant as free as the birds to give opinions from every direction and in every dimension.

So as to extract all the thought you can on the subject, it may be advisable to follow up this type of question with a probing question.

Try to assess the stage of development of the discussion. If opinion is well crystallized or falls into definite patterns, the open-ended question may be a waste of time.

Two-Way Question (The two-way question is one which is designed to suggest two possible alternatives. Approve or disapprove and why; for and against and why; favor and oppose and why.)

Consider whether there is a reasonable middle-ground position which some participants might take.

Give condideration to the mildness or harshness of alternate questions. The stronger the feeling implied by the alternatives, the less response there will be.

Other Types of Questions

Double-barreled questions deserve to be split into separate questions.

The "or what?" tag at the end of a question is not as effective as either an open-ended or a two-way question.

Wording Questions

Avoid questions which have the appearance of "talking down" or otherwise insulting the intelligence of the participants.

Word your questions according to principles of good usage but don't make it sound stilted.

Use as few words as possible. Make your questions specific without making them over-elaborate. You can ask most questions in twenty words or less.

Loading Questions

Citing the status quo will, to some extent, inhibit participants from expressing minority opinions.

The first few words of your question are important. Consider the effect of such words as: should, could, and might. The should wording brings up the moral issue. The could wording poses the issue of possibility. The might wording moves to the issue of probabilty (should - moral; could - possible; might - probable.)

Introduction of examples may divert attention from the issue to the examples. If an example or illustration is necessary to make the idea clear, be sure it fits the situation.

Avoid questions which express the bias of the leader. An expression of opinion by the leader will often inhibit some of the members of the group from expressing an opposing opinion. Example: ....don't you agree? ...don't you believe? ...ought we? ...as we all know ...shouldn't we? etc.

The Major Principle

Before asking any question to promote the development of discussion, ask yourself, "what am I taking for granted?"

Avoid implied alternatives. No fault can be found with stating the alternatives while some harm may result from leaving it to be carried by implication.

State both sides of the issue when necessary. The "or not" ending may not be enough to give the other side a fair shake. In most cases, it is advisable to state the question so that the participants know the major pro and con sides of the issue.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER IN APPRAISING AND REVIEWING BOOKS

Despite their professional preparation in content analysis, not all librarians are as adept at "reading a book technically" as they will need to become in order to prepare themselves for group work activity. The following questions arranged by broad areas in knowledge supplement Mann's techniques of reading a document technically (Introduction to Cataloging and Classification. ALA, 1943):

Bibliography

1. Does the book give the full life of the subject, or is one part emphasized more than another? What justification is there for either treatment?
2. What is the point of view of the author? How has he known the subject? Personally,? Through research?
3. Are idiosyncracies and weaknesses omitted, treated adequately or overplayed?
4. How is the biography organized--chronologically or in journalistic fashion with "who, where, when, what and how" approach?
5. Is the treatment superficial or does the author show extensive knowledge of subject?
6. How does this treatment compare with others and what makes it different from others?

History

History and biography are much alike. Many of the questions for reviewing it are also applicable to history. In addition, the following may be used:

1. What kind of training has the author had for this kind of writing? Does he know his subject, and can he write? How have the public and the critics reacted to previous works of his?
2. What seems to be the point of view of the author?

3. Is the style essentially that of reportorial writing, or is there an effort at interpretive writing?
4. For what group is the book intended?
5. Does it emphasize traditional subject matter such as wars, rulers, etc., or is it social history?
6. Will the book soon be out of date, or is it written to stand the test of time?
7. What are the visual aids used--pictures, maps, charts, etc.? Are they of value in understanding the period written about, or are they merely decorative?

Contemporary Thought

Books on contemporary thought include current books on economics, government, religion, philosophy, sciences, etc. These are similar to speeches and essays and can best be reviewed in the same way that public speeches are reviewed in the public press. The opening sentences should include the gist of the book's content, including all the major concepts. This can often be found in the author's introduction or in his concluding paragraphs. Then one section or concept can be used for fuller analysis. The following questions may be used:

1. If the introduction or first chapter states explicitly the purpose of the author, does such a statement enable the reader to "place" the book in relation to a particular school of writing, or to a particular point of view concerning society?
2. If the purpose of the author is not explicitly stated, it is possible to infer such purpose from the contents? Does either the first or last chapter summarize the author's hypotheses or conclusions? Are there summary paragraphs at the end of each chapter which give a quick view of the author's conclusions?
3. If there are not easily found statements in the text, does the table of contents throw any light on the author's scope or treatment, or aspects of the problems which seem important to him?
4. What kinds of evidence are used? Does he indicate how he established authenticity or reliability of his evidence? Has he used primary or secondary sources, or both? Can you think of any type of evidence which he might have used but has not?
5. Has he borrowed the point of view, the concepts, the theories, or the methods of any discipline other than __________? If so, what? Has he over-extended the significance or the certainty of such borrowings?
6. What educational level must a reader have reached in order to read the book with comprehension and enjoyment? Is the book likely to be read only by those who will be able to criticize its validity, or is it likely to appeal to readers who habitually accept anything the author says? In the latter case, the librarian must exercise greatest care; whereas the mature and critical reader may be safely left to carry on his own argument with the author.
7. Can you estimate the range of reader appeal this book will have, and for what type of library it is a suitable purchase?

Travel and Adventure

Within its limits, a review in this field should be a travel article, interesting in itself, and capable of standing entirely on its own feet. Many of the foregoing questions may prove useful as well as the following:

1. How does the author accomplish his purpose? Does he emphasize the exotic or use the exotic for sensationalism or to show truths?
2. What is new or different about this book? What specific contributions does this volume make to man's knowledge of geography, government, economics, etc.?

Fiction

There are four essential elements to the novel: characters, setting, the plot or theme, and style. Chapters 1, 2, 11, What's in a Novel by Helen Haines (Columbia U. P., 1942) are good for background reading. A few questions which may be asked about novels include the following:

1. Where does the author get his characters? Are they historical, or based on persons the author has known, or figments of the imagination?
2. What is his attitude toward his characters? Does he look upon them with pride, with sympathy, or is his attitude one of hostility and belittlement?
3. What is the locale and time of the story? Is its primary interest regional, historical, or are these only incidental to some other purpose?
4. How are the various elements of plot handled: introduction, suspense, climax and conclusion? To what extent is accident employed as a complicating or resolving force? Is fate used?
5. Is the style of writing important enough to bring out? Does the author use exaggeration, understatement, vivid description, etc., to make his points? Does he use vulgarity? What is his choice of word?

Reader Interest and Usage

1. Treatment in book reviews.
2. Other books to which this one is related.
3. Of interest to: adults, young people, students, teachers, specialists, etc.?
4. Values for the reader: information, contribution to culture, stimulation of interests, recreation, entertainment, etc.?
5. Recommended for: public library (main, branches, deposit stations, pay collection), college library, university library, school library, special library, etc."

Question for study and discussion:

What is book evaluation and appraisal based on: best literature? literary quality (which many recent and useful books do not have)? or the intentions, qualifications and skill of the writer in meeting his objectives?

ARRANGING DISCUSSION FOR IMAGINATIVE WORKS

Discussion patterns using works of the imagination or other records of human experience suggest that there is a sequence important for its psychological implications which needs to be established in discussing values. The sequence should provide for the following steps.

A retelling of what occurred in the story itself. The incidents, feeling and relationships under consideration should be identified. It is sometimes possible to read aloud the passage that shows a particular point. At other times, it helps to ask someone to tell in his own words the incident which illustrates a particular point, or the leader can do this retelling.

With persons inexperienced in discussion, response to the questions: "What happened in this story?" may bring a flood of incidents that do not have relevancy to human relationships. The leader may need to ask: "What do you think the author meant to tell us in that incident?" This first stage of discussion focuses on meaningful recall and prepares for the next step.

Stimulation to identify similar incidents in the experience of participants or from other works of the imagination. This step gives an opportunity to describe incidents of similar emotional content and to generalize about them. This gives validity to the unconscious awareness that fiction, drama or biography do extend experience. Such questions are helpful: "Have you ever seen something like this happen? When? Where? How was the incident you describe like or different from this?"

Probing into what happened in feeling, in shift of relationships and change of behavior. This aims at making more vivid the identification with the feelings of the characters in books. It is fostered by the use of such questions as: "What did the character do? Why did he do this? In what ways did he show his feelings? How do you feel about what he did? How would you have felt had you not been in his shoes?"

Exploring consequences of certain behaviors or feelings. Participants need a chance to recapitulate what happened in a given relationship as a result of some specific behavior or consequences. Such questions are helpful: "In what ways did ____________'s feelings or behavior make a difference? Who in the story had a happier or more difficult time because this happened?"

Developing some tentative generalizations about the consequences of certain behaviors or feelings. The reader needs an opportunity to determine whether or not certain situations, behaviors or feelings foster better human relationships, growth and happiness. Questions such as the following facilitate arriving at tentative conclusions: "What kind of behavior, feeling or arrangement makes the situation better for people? If you could relive one of your experiences, what would you do differently? Why? How can we help people to choose what will foster the best human relationships? What would you do to make the situation different?

Tentative generalizations about behaviors or feelings serve as issues for continued discussion. An imaginative author communicates through images, incidents and characterization; whereas the author of an an expository style communicates through concepts. Discussion groups need experience with all forms of communication. Works of the imagination may serve as a bridge between the highly visual presentation of film and the conceptual language of exposition.

Sample Discussion: Shakespeare's 116th Sonnet

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alternation finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be
taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and
cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
  If this be error and upon me proved,
  I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

What does the author say?

What does the author mean?

How is this significant today?

Will you rephrase what Mr. ..... has just s